



A RECORD OF A MORTAL'S JOURNEY TO IMMORTALITY

BOOK 05

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A Record of a Mortal's Journey to Immortality

(凡人修仙传)

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Synopsis

A poor and ordinary boy from a village joins a minor sect in Jiang Hu and becomes an Unofficial Disciple by chance.

How will Han Li, a commoner by birth, establish a foothold for himself in his sect?

With his mediocre aptitude, how will he successfully traverse the path of cultivation and become an immortal?

This is a story of an ordinary mortal who, against all odds, clashes with devilish demons and the ancient celestials in order to find his own path to immortality.

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Chapter 401: Heaven Lightning Bamboo

Han Li didn't fly back to his cave residence after leaving the teahouse. Instead, he walked along the road and suddenly turned a corner into the rear of a nearby store.

Afterwards, he closed his eyes and calmly stood in silence.

A long while later, Han Li frowned and opened his eyes.

He had just attempted to stealthily use his spiritual sense to return to the teahouse and listen in on what they said afterwards. However, he hadn't expected to be blocked by a layer of restrictions as he approached their room.

These restrictions couldn't be considered to high quality and could be easily broken through with Han Li's spiritual sense. However, it would cause far too much of a commotion and ruin his plan of stealthily spying on them. Since Han Li wasn't able to forcefully continue, he withdrew his spiritual sense.

"It seems the Exquisite Sound Sect isn't to be trifled with. They've left no holes to be exploited." Han Li opened his mouth and spat out the inch long green dagger and used it to fly back to his cave residence.

After returning to his residence, Han Li went to his hidden room and retrieved the storage pouch holding the demon beast materials. He then called out to Crooked Soul, having him accompany him back to the teahouse for safety. The journey back

and forth had taken quite a few hours.

Fortunately, by the time Han Li and Crooked Soul returned to the teahouse, Lady Fan's subordinate, the middle-aged man, was anxiously waiting for him. Upon seeing Han Li approaching, he immediately ran inside with a happy expression.

Han Li saw that he went back to report to Lady Fan and didn't seem to mind. He then calmly walked inside with Crooked Soul.

By the time Han Li arrived at their room, the young woman and the middle-aged man were respectfully waiting for him.

"Elder Zhao and Lady Fan are awaiting you!" The woman spoke with a careful, respectful expression. After she finished, she stole a curious glance at Crooked Soul.

Without any intention of introducing Crooked Soul, Han Li nodded his head and bluntly entered the room with Crooked Soul close behind him.

The young woman hesitated for a moment, but she didn't dare to step forward and investigate him.

Lady Fan had covered her face beforehand. Upon seeing Han Li enter, her eyes lit up in a graceful welcome.

"Senior Han has arrived quite quickly! I had believed you would've taken a moment more. Huh, this Senior is...?" Lady Fan's

beaming smile froze after seeing Crooked Soul.

“This is my good friend, Crooked Soul. After hearing of this matter, he wished to have a look. I’m sure Lady Fan doesn’t mind, yes?” Han Li chuckled and deemphasized Crooked Soul’s presence.

“Of course not. Please, have a seat!” Lady Fan took a good look at Crooked Soul’s ugly face and his ice-cold expression for a moment before speaking with a sweet smile.

She secretly rejoiced in her heart. Fortunately, they hadn’t planned to carry out any foul play; otherwise, they would’ve provoked a great enemy, given the appearance of his Core Formation associate.

In addition, her intentions to rope in Han Li only grew stronger.

“The materials are all in here. Please, take a look!” Han Li was straightforward. After taking a seat, he threw the two pouches containing the demon beast materials on the table.

When Lady Fan saw this, she was unable to conceal her joy and expressed her thanks before picking up the storage pouch and examining them with her spiritual sense. Afterwards, she handed the pouch over to Elder Zhao.

The old man calmly received the pouch and examined the items within for appraisal.

This took some time because the quantity of materials were far too great in number. While this was happening, Lady Fan was chatting with Han Li while wearing a beaming smile and unconsciously made an inquiry about the material's origin.

But as Han Li was someone of quick mind, he was able to deflect the question and give the woman no information.

After a short amount of time, Elder Zhao finished checking the materials and used a voice transmission to give Lady Fan an estimate. After some silent deliberation, she lowered the price by a tenth and offered it to Han Li.

When Han Li heard this, he started muttering to himself, causing Lady Fan to somewhat worry. In order to ensure the deal went through she gritted her teeth and hesitated for a moment before taking the initiative to raise the price by five percent.

After hearing the new price, Han Li nodded his head and approved. Although he clearly understood the price given was a bit low, being able to sell off all of these items in a single instance was much to his satisfaction.

When Lady Fan saw Han Li approve, she felt greatly relieved and handed over a storage pouch containing a small sum of mid-grade spirit stones.

The deal was now finished and both sides were satisfied.

But as Han Li was about to take his leave, the woman casually said, “I’ve heard that Senior is looking for some exotic spirit bamboo. I happened to just acquire some information on this. Would Senior be interested in staying to listen?”

Han Li’s heart strongly stirred and he couldn’t help but turn around.

At that moment, Lady Fan was looking at Han Li with a smile. Her beautiful eyes were concealing a peculiar glint.

Lady Fan, an expert of bewitchment techniques, intended to take advantage of Han Li’s shock and stealthily plant a seed deep in his heart. In the future, Han Li would unconsciously become deferential to her as a result.

As Han Li met her gaze, he felt a concentrated feeling of attraction towards her; it was smothering and difficult to escape.

As his mind had nearly succumbed to the pressure, a thought flashed through his mind like lightning, ‘Bewitchment Technique!’

Suddenly, Han Li’s heart trembled and his expression grew ice-cold. Upon seeing Han Li’s icy intent, Lady Fan’s heart trembled and her bewitchment technique lost its effect.

Fearful, she hastily thought to turn her gaze away, but for some unknown reason, her neck and skull had grown stiff and she was unable to turn her gaze away; she wasn’t even able to open her

mouth.

‘Cultivation backlash!’ Once Lady Fan recognized what was happening, she felt her heart drop and did her utmost to break free of Han Li’s grasp.

“What did you do to Left Envoy Fan?” When Elder Zhao saw that Lady Fan appeared amiss, his eyes coldly glinted and he thought to step forward.

However, Crooked Soul then blurred, disappearing from his sight. The old man couldn’t help but be alarmed upon his sudden reappearance at his side with a strange movement technique, not knowing whether or not he should take action.

At that moment, Lady Fan’s expression became heartbreakingly pitiful, begging Han Li to show her mercy as her struggle to break free had been fruitless.

“Humph!” With a cold snort, Han Li released her from his icy gaze.

The woman then hastily turned her gaze away as if she were being spared. But at the same time, she couldn’t help but spit out a mouthful of blood and stain her shawl red.

“Left Envoy Fan, are you...?” Elder Zhao raised his brow upon seeing this and furiously glared at Han Li, wanting to attack.

“Elder Zhao, don’t get angry! Senior Han treated me leniently. I only suffered Qi backlash. Spitting out only a bit of blood is already merciful!” Lady Fan hastily stopped the old man from acting out of fury and said this with a wide smile.

Having heard this, the old man’s expression gradually softened and returned to normal.

“I truly didn’t think that Senior was an expert proficient in bewitchment techniques! I had impulsively attempted to test you, please don’t blame me too harshly. However, I really do know some minor information on the whereabouts of Heaven Lightning Bamboo.” Having seen that Han Li’s gaze was still harsh, the woman took the initiative to speak, afraid that Han Li would investigate the previous matter.

“Heaven Lightning Bamboo!” Han Li’s ice-cold expression stirred upon hearing this.

“Heaven Lightning Bamboo? The same that is known as one of the three great divine woods?” Han Li was doubtful of what he heard, but his voice still contained a trace of excitement. Although he planned to use an exceptional bamboo to refine his magic treasure, he hadn’t thought of being able to use one of the three great divine woods to refine it! But wasn’t it said those three great divine woods have all gone extinct?

Lady Fan took out a small jade bottle and swallowed a medicine pill that restored her pale complexion before replying with absolute certainty, “That’s right! I have personally handled the item. It is definitely genuine.”

“Could it be that you’ve already sold it to someone else?” Han Li stared at the woman and his tone grew cold once more. At the same time, he apprehensively thought, ‘Could it be this woman hasn’t learned her lesson and wishes to use me to handle her dirty work?’

After a moment of hesitation, Lady Fan decided to give an explanation with an honest appearance, “No. This item was originally to be auctioned off in Heavenly Star City. However, we didn’t expect for a majority of our goods to be robbed during transport. Our sect has managed to find the hideout of our thieves and are inviting righteous Daoists to take care of them in a single blow!”

Chapter 402: Envoys Of The Left And Right

“It was stolen?” Han Li’s gaze flashed with distrust.

“Although Senior isn’t convinced, this matter is completely true!” Lady Fan then revealed a wry smile.

“Two months ago, our store was undergoing a large transaction. The profit was such that our Exquisite Sound Sect wouldn’t have had to conduct business for another ten years. Thus, our sect collected a large amount of materials and sent them off, escorted by our Sect Master Wang and the majority of our experts. However, a group of masked cultivators intercepted our convoy. The techniques of their six Core Formation cultivators were profound and evil, and the remaining cultivators were proficient in cooperative techniques. Our sect master was overwhelmed and died at the scene, and the storage pouches holding the items were stolen. A majority of our ordinary sect disciples perished in the attack as well. Were it not for two of our elders throwing caution to the wind and using secret techniques that lowered their cultivation, they would’ve killed us all and no one would’ve known.” The woman’s voice had turned gloomy and her expression turned remorseful.

“It wasn’t a trap setup by the buyer?” Han Li instantly blurted out.

“That is impossible! Our buyer was a member of the Four Elements Merchant Union. They have a flawless reputation. Why would they ruin their reputation over robbing such a minor amount of goods, given their strength?” Lady Fan lightly shook

her head and denied this with a pale face, revealing an appearance of frail powerlessness.

Han Li coldly gazed on and didn't say anything. He didn't have the slightest intention of consoling the woman.

In response to Han Li's indifference, Lady Fan could only softly put away her grief and continue her explanation, "That small stalk of Heaven Lightning Bamboo was the treasure of a small sect. However, the sect had declined extremely far and only had a single specialist that remained. Thus, they had recently sold the item to our Exquisite Sound Sect. My sect master had carried this item on his body and planned to auction it off at Heavenly Star City after the deal was concluded. We didn't expect it to be plundered as well."

"But when my sect master was transporting these goods, he had conducted a minor trick on them and we were able to quickly track down their hideout as a result. However, these thieves have quite a few Core Formation cultivators among them, and our sect doesn't have the strength to take them down. As a result, this meeting wasn't just about purchasing your goods. We were also assigned the responsibility to scout out high level cultivators for assistance. Seniors' magic power is quite profound. If you are willing to help us, we wouldn't mind giving you the Heaven Lightning Bamboo."

The woman chose her words carefully before arriving at her original intention. Han Li's expression was indifferent when he heard this, but his eyes continuously shifted around as if he were thinking about something.

When Lady Fan saw this, she knew Han Li was weighing the advantages and disadvantages, and she hurriedly attempted to make the deal sweeter, “If Senior still feels the price is low, our sect is willing to gift an outstanding beauty to Senior as a servant.”

“Not interested!” Han Li bluntly rejected her without the slightest consideration. The woman immediately revealed disappointment in response.

Han Li lightly exhaled and asked a question that greatly surprised the woman, “Has the Heaven Lightning Bamboo been refined? Can it continue to age?”

“It hasn’t been refined. The Heaven Lightning Bamboo was carefully nurtured by that small sect for over a hundred years. It can be further nurtured and continue to sprout out more stalks without a problem. Could it be that Senior doesn’t wish to use it to refine a magic treasure and wishes to leave it behind for his descendants? However, the Heaven Lightning Bamboo grows extremely slowly. After every thousand years, it only grows by only a inch. It is truly difficult to breed!” The woman asked, baffled.

Han Li didn’t respond to her question, lowering his head in contemplation.

Just when Elder Zhao started to appear impatient, Han Li finally came to decision and calmly said, “In addition to the Heaven Lightning Bamboo, we still require another item as payment. After all, Crooked Soul is taking action alongside me.”

“That isn’t a problem. Our sect finds these conditions acceptable!” Lady Fan agreed to the conditions with a beaming smile as if she had no intention of arguing.

“Since this is the case, send someone to inform me at my cave residence when the time comes. Surely your esteemed sect should know where it is.”

Without waiting for Lady Fan to say anything more, he cupped his hands and quickly left with Crooked Soul, not allowing her any additional opportunities to use any of her bewitchment techniques.

Han Li’s blunt departure left Elder Zhao and Lady Fan looking at each other in dismay. Lady Fan’s eyes revealed complicated emotions as her face continuously shifted between clear and gloomy.

After returning to his cave residence, rather than quietly waiting for the Exquisite Sound Sect to call on him, he visited a few of his Core Formation cultivator acquaintances and made a few inquiries about the Exquisite Sound Sect.

Surprisingly, they had all heard of this sect before. One of them even had previous transactions with them.

According to what they said, the Exquisite Sound Sect was acceptable and their business dealings were good. However, their sect had only had women in positions of power for generations.

This included the position of sect master.

The Exquisite Sound Sect's strength couldn't be said to be powerful. Apart from the sect master, the only other high positions were the Envoy of the Left and the Envoy of the Right. As such, it was only natural that they would employ two or three guest elders as support. Among mid-grade powers, they could be considered to be among neither the best nor the worst.

But even with their strength being nothing of note, they weren't to be easily provoked. This was because the female cultivators of the Exquisite Sound Sect were each as beautiful as a flower and well cultured. Those in power would often fight over their outstanding female cultivators to be their Dao companion. As such, they received quite a bit of both open and hidden support.

However, what Han Li was most concerned about was that while their reputation was decent, he heard that they had plotted a small number of malicious conspiracies to murder other cultivators. But what was most famous about the Exquisite Sound Sect were their bewitchment techniques. There were a large number of male cultivators that had become completely infatuated with their sect's female disciples.

After acquiring this information, Han Li felt that he now had a general understanding of the Exquisite Sound Sect. After some consideration, it seemed that he would have to take this job as he was unable to resist the Heaven Lightning Bamboo.

As such, ever since he had returned to his cave residence, he started to quickly craft grade three puppets without end.

Half a month later, a sound transmission talisman flew into Han Li's hand. After Han Li took a look, he tranquilly arranged his items and then brought Crooked Soul along with his two Bloodjade Spiders out of his cave residence.

When he arrived at one of Heavenly Star City's gates, the young woman named Lian'er was waiting for him apprehensively. When she saw Han Li and Crooked Soul arrive, she hastily ran over to them with a smile and said, "Seniors! My mistress wishes for me to bring you to the island we're gathering at. We will then set off on our journey afterwards."

Han Li nodded his head and wordlessly spit out his Green Brilliance Dagger. After wrapping the girl in the dagger's light, he flew off.

Crooked Soul turned into a streak of yellow light and followed after them.

This seemed to be the young woman's first time using a magic treasure to fly. Between occasionally giving Han Li some directions, she continuously gazed at Han Li's swordlight with great curiosity. But whenever her gaze met Han Li's, she bashfully turned her head away.

The young woman and Han Li were quite close within the sword light, almost touching each other. If Han Li slightly lowered his head, he would be able to see her white, flawless neck and smell the woman's sweet fragrance, taking advantage of his minor

amount of luck.

The woman seemed to have noticed this and her cheeks blushed a result, leaving Han Li feeling quite amused. He couldn't help but wear a mysterious smile.

He had guessed that since Lady Fan sent her personal servant to guide his way, she was attempting to use a genuine beauty to entrap him as her bewitchment techniques had proven ineffective on him.

With that thought, he inwardly sneered and presumptuously took a deep whiff of the young woman's scent, causing her to slightly tremble. Her delicate, white ears turned pink, and she appeared somewhat panicked.

However, Han Li's imprudent actions stopped there, and he didn't progress a single step further. The young woman eventually regained her calm and continued to give Han Li directions.

An hour later, Han Li descended onto a small barren, nameless island.

About a hundred meters away from the mountaintop, in addition to Lady Fan and Elder Zhao, there were over a dozen people sitting in meditation or whispering amongst themselves.

There were five Core Formation cultivators, and the others were late Foundation Establishment. It seemed that the Exquisite Sound

Sect had spent quite a bit of their influence to gather this many people.

Upon seeing her servant arrive together with Han Li and Crooked Soul, Lady Fan couldn't help but reveal happiness and hastily walked over with light steps.

“It is truly fortunate for our Sect that you two Seniors have agreed to come! Let me introduce you to the others!” The woman's eyes appeared to be overflowing with emotion.

She introduced Han Li and Crooked Soul to a Core Formation cultivator surnamed Meng and four Foundation Establishment cultivators.

But what was baffling was that after Lady Fan introduced them to these people, as if in an attempt to demonstrate her power, she didn't introduce them to the others.

Lady Fan looked at a pretty woman wearing lotus green clothing, and Han Li followed her gaze, realizing that the cultivators she hadn't introduced to them appeared to be affiliated with the green clothed woman.

The woman had long eyebrows, upturned eyes, and a tall, slender nose. Her elegant eyes seemed to conceal a baleful aura. From a single glance, one could tell that she held a position of authority. However, her appearance aroused a desire to conquer her among men.

This woman coldly laughed after seeing Lady Fan, but she appeared slightly shocked upon seeing Han Li and Crooked Soul. She then turned around and whispered to a middle-aged cultivator behind her, not paying attention to Lady Fan in the slightest.

“Who is she?” Han Li asked with a calm expression.

Fan Jingmei gave a start before begrudgingly giving an answer, “Zhuo Ruting, our sect’s Envoy of the Right.”

“Hm.” Han Li couldn’t help but take another glance at this woman, much to the displeasure of Fan Jingmei.

Han Li didn’t have any unbecoming thoughts towards this Zhuo Ruting. He merely felt that the grace and appearance of this woman gave him a feeling of strong familiarity, and he couldn’t help but sink into contemplation.

Lady Fan grew sullen upon seeing this and turned to speak with Crooked Soul. However, Crooked Soul remained expressionless while she spoke and didn’t utter a single word in response, leaving her even gloomier.

Chapter 403: Eccentric Scarletflame

‘Nangong Wan!’ Han Li eventually found the origin of his feeling of familiarity.

Although the appearance of the female cultivator named Zhuo Rutin differed from Nangong Wan, the slight similarity between their elegant grace stirred his heart’s deepest depths.

Now knowing the cause of this feeling, Han Li looked at Zhou Ruting before turning his gaze away and calming the great disturbance in his heart.

However, ever since Han Li and Crooked Soul had arrived, Lady Fan and Zhuo Ruting showed no intention of wanting to immediately set off. Instead, they were occasionally looking towards the sky as if they were waiting for someone.

Han Li was somewhat puzzled by this, but he didn’t bother to ask any questions. Instead, he found a desolate corner and sat there with Crooked Soul, quietly waiting for the mission to start.

They waited for nearly a day. Were these people not cultivators, each completely patient, they would’ve long started complaining. But even with this being the case, people still revealed dissatisfaction.

Lady Fan and Zhuo Ruting revealed slight worry under these circumstances and begrudgingly met to converse in whispers.

When Han Li saw this, he speculated who exactly they were waiting for before suddenly being interrupted by the sounds of thunder coming from the appearance of a black streak at the edge of the sky.

As the black streak quickly approached them, the many cultivators sitting in meditation each stood up and gazed at it with amazed expressions. In the blink of an eye, the black streak had already arrived above them. Han Li and the others were now able to clearly see that this black streak was actually a black cloud with a diameter of about twenty meters. Its area was large enough to cover the entire mountaintop. With its occasional rumbles of thunder and flashes of lightning, it appeared even more bizarre.

As the crowd was blankly staring at the black cloud, a woman's cold voice suddenly came from within, "Senior Scarletflame, you can let me down now. I wish to speak with my two Senior Martial Sisters."

"Hehe, of course!" An extremely hoarse voice gave a croaking reply.

Lady Fan's and Zhuo Ruting's expressions changed slightly upon hearing the voices and they glanced at one another. The other cultivators figured out the origins of the black cloud and their expressions became bright.

Just as Han Li was restless and confused, he heard one of the other cultivators mutter, "The Exquisite Sound Sect has quite

some ability. They were actually able to invite Turtle Source Island's Eccentric Scarletflame!"

Han Li was able to clearly hear this person's whisper through use of his exceptional Spiritual Sense. After hearing it, his heart trembled.

When Han Li heard the words 'Turtle Source Island' and 'Eccentric Scarletflame', Han Li immediately knew of the black cloud's origins.

When he was getting acquainted with a few Core Formation cultivators, they had mentioned the grand reputation of "Turtle Source Island's Eccentric Scarlet Flame" several times. This late Core Formation cultivator had long become well-known in the Scattered Star Seas from the unpredictability of his Water Sunflower Devilish Art and his brutal ruthlessness.

Many people had also said that Eccentric Scarlet flame was extremely likely to enter Nascent Soul; it was only a matter of time before he became a great hero similar to Martial Ancestor Zenith Yin. As he was the sole hegemon of Turtle Source Island, no one dared to easily provoke him. As such, he could be considered to be an impressive person of renown. Could it be that the Exquisite Sound Sect had requested for him to come here to assist them?

Han Li calmly raised his head and carefully examined the black cloud with a vigilant heart.

At that moment, the black cloud furled out a gap and a slender

woman dressed in violet royal garments flew out. She carried herself with graceful elegance, but her face was concealed by a faint purple Qi.

When Lady Fan and Zhuo Ruting saw her appear, they immediately stepped forward to welcome her.

“Junior Martial Sister Wang, why is Eccentric Scarletflame here? Could it be that you invited him? That wasn’t necessary!” Zhuo Ruting softly asked with a slight frown.

“That’s right. This Eccentric isn’t to be easily provoked. Devils are easily invited but hard to get rid of! In addition, our current manpower is already sufficient!” Lady Fan spoke with a heavy expression, revealing a slight trace of dissatisfaction.

“Didn’t you two Senior Martial Sisters also believe that we had enough manpower while transporting the goods?” The violet-clothed woman faintly stated without paying attention to the other two’s worries.

Lady Fan immediately understood what she had meant and asked with bewilderment, “Junior Martial Sister, what do you mean? Does the enemy have other problematic characters?”

Zhuo Ruting also revealed an astonished expression.

“I’ve received information that their lair is being overseen by their leader, a late Core Formation cultivator. As the manpower

that Senior Martial Sisters have gathered fell short, I took a trip to Turtle Origin Island to persuade Eccentric Scarletflame to help us!”

After hearing this, the two senior women looked at each other in doubt and said no more.

Although they knew that their junior had paid an enormous price to convince Eccentric Scarletfire to aid them, this wasn’t the time to address it. It was best left for after the matter at hand was concluded.

At that moment, the violet clothed woman swept her gaze past the cultivators on the mountaintop and sized them up before nodding her head as if she was satisfied.

“Senior Martial Sisters invited a few more Core Formation cultivators than expected. With the aid of Eccentric Scarletflame, we will definitely be able to kill those evil cultivators and avenge my mother!” The violet clothed woman’s voice turned extremely cold, filled with intense killing intent.

“Be at ease, we will definitely avenge our sect master and repay this debt!” Zhuo Ruting slowly said as she lightly brushed her beautiful, jet-black hair.

“That’s right. Sect Master treated us with great kindness. We will give up our lives if it means killing the enemy.” Lady Fan solemnly agreed.

The violet-clothed woman felt moved and deeply bowed to the two.

“I have greatly troubled you two Senior Martial Sisters! Since this matter has already been addressed, so long as my mother has been avenged, one of you two will be assuming the position of sect master. I, Wang Ning, do not seek to take that position!” The violet-clothed woman decisively said.

After this was said, Zhuo Ruting’s beautiful face wore a complicated expression. Her red lips opened but she decided to stay silent in the end.

As for Lady Fan, although she managed to keep her expression calm, her eyes held a trace of unconcealable excitement.

Not far from Han Li, a cultivator surnamed Meng muttered to himself, “Tch tch! That must be the Exquisite Sound Sect’s Fairy Violet Spirit. It’s such a shame that she concealed her face with a magic technique.”

When Han Li heard this, his heart stirred. He had heard of the Fairy Violet Spirit before. It was said that she was as beautiful as a goddess and was one of the most beautiful women in the Scattered Star Seas. Could that be her?

Han Li gazed at the violet-clothed woman in the distance with slight astonishment.

At that moment, the three woman finished talking, and the violet-clothed woman flew back up towards the black cloud like a goddess. Then the Envoys of the Left and the Right eventually started the operation with solemn expressions.

Over a dozen streaks of radiance flew from the mountaintop and headed north in a loose flight formation.

Han Li and Crooked Soul occupied a position at the center rear, flying in silence. However, for some unknown reason, the cultivator surnamed Meng flew to Han Li's side and started gleefully chatting with him.

“Why has Fellow Daoist Han agreed to help Left Envoy Fan? As for me, it was because one of my concubines was one of her direct disciples. I couldn't help but assist them! Could it be that Fellow Daoist Han also...”

“I don't have much luck with woman unlike Fellow Daoist Meng. Lady Fan merely promised to give me an item worth my time!” Han Li indifferently said.

“That is truly a pity! Brother, the best things about the Exquisite Sound Sect are naturally their beautiful female disciples. Particularly the disciples that were personally instructed by their two Envoys. Those are truly...”

Although Han Li remained calm as he listened to the endless jabber, he felt unsure of whether he should laugh or cry. With his speech being overly familiar from the very start, Han Li was

reminded of his garrulous Senior Martial Brother back at Yellow Maple Valley and was unable to bear this man any ill will.

As such, Han Li occasionally gave him an answer while following the lead of those from the Exquisite Sound Sect, flying towards an unknown location.

The eventually arrived on a desolate island where a few lower level disciples from the Exquisite Sound Sect had been waiting for them for quite some time. They were keeping watch on the bandit's den on a nameless island not far away.

Knowing that no one had left the evil cultivator's den, Fairy Violet Spirit flew down from the black cloud and had Han Li and company rest for a moment. On the next morning, they were going to mount a surprise raid.

Chapter 404: A Deceptive Situation

The night quietly passed by.

Just as dawn broke, the cultivators silently appeared above the evil cultivators' lair.

"It's here?" Fairy Violet Spirit looked down at the small black island beneath her with confusion. The island was truly small and it only had a radius of about two kilometers. It would be more accurate to call this a huge reef.

"That's right. Not only have the Golden Cicada Wasps arrived at this location, but the two elders have also confirmed it. Those evil cultivators are here." Lady Fan softly said.

The violet-clothed woman then silently nodded her head and no longer held doubt.

However, this place was obviously a temporary hideout. Not only was the island pathetically small, but there was only an extremely simple illusion formation placed down that was basically worthless.

"Kill without hesitation!" After Fairy Violet Spirit coldly shouted her command, Eccentric Scarletflame's bewildering laugh echoed out of his black cloud, easily wiping out their pathetic formation with resounding bolts of lightning. Afterwards the other cultivators bluntly rushed down.

The sound of their formation breaking had obviously alerted the people below.

Several sharp whistles sounded out from below. Fifty streaks of radiance flourished out, and a large number of cultivators met their advance. The three Core Formation cultivators leading them were surprised to see the Exquisite Sound Sect. But without waiting for their reply, Lady Fan yelled, "Strike!" She then released a silver wheel magic tool and took the initiative to attack.

When the other cultivators saw this, they bluntly followed her lead and attacked.

The sky was suddenly filled with flashes of radiance and deafening whistles.

Since Han Li was acting under the intention of acquiring the Heaven Lightning Bamboo, he naturally found it embarrassing to stay idle. As a result, he and Crooked Soul casually took out their magic treasures and tied down five Foundation Establishment cultivators, preparing to eliminate them in one blow.

As two Core Formation cultivators, they should've been able to easily deal with a small group of Foundation Establishment cultivators. However, something shocking had occurred.

When the five Foundation Cultivators discovered that two Core Formation cultivators were attacking them, their clothes were ripped away to reveal fiend demons. Han Li was shocked to the

point that his eyes had nearly fallen out of his head despite having seen them before.

But even with their greatly increased cultivation and speed, Han Li was no longer a mere Foundation Establishment cultivator. They only managed to resist for a few moments more before Han Li and Crooked Soul turned them to ash with their magic treasures.

At this point, Han LI had discovered that their fiend demon transformations were different from that of the Black Fiend School. Not only did their transformations not require an incantation or cocoon, but an elemental blood core wasn't present in their bodies.

Han Li felt extremely confused and puzzled. He pondered for a moment on whether or not they had some sort of relationship to the Black Fiend School. But he immediately dropped the thought and attentively looked in the other directions. Now was not the time to ponder these questions. It would be absurd if he allowed anyone to ambush him just because his thoughts were running astray.

However, what Han Li saw only made his doubts grow stronger. A majority of the evil Foundation Establishment cultivators had underwent a fiend demon transformation. In addition, they formed small groups and were fiercely fighting with all their might.

The three enemy Core Formation cultivators had earlier been restrained by Eccentric Scarletflame's black cloud and were unable

of escaping. Judging from the incessant rolls of thunder from the cloud, it seemed they were being quite strenuously held in place.

At the moment, the enemy's several Core Formation cultivators and many Foundation Establishment cultivators had been reduced to under half of their original numbers in the blink of an eye. But even so, the remaining survivors still fearlessly fought on.

Their dauntless attitude had left many attacking Exquisite Sound Sect cultivators greatly astonished.

But at that moment, a fierce whistle pierced the air, leaving the Exquisite Sound Sect cultivators deafened for a moment. Everyone's expressions had involuntarily changed.

“Why are you all standing still? Quickly kill them off! Something troublesome is about to arrive!” Eccentric Scarletflame's words croaked out of his black cloud, waking the many cultivators from a daze and allowing them to continue their fierce attacks.

When the evil cultivators heard the sharp whistle, their spirits were greatly roused, becoming even more tenacious. For the time being, they were unable to be struck down.

In the following instant, several streaks of ash gray light arrived above the island.

When the Exquisite Sound Sect cultivators saw this, they stopped and stared at the five newly arrived Core formation cultivators

with grave vigilance.

The large, middle-aged man leading them had an ashen complexion. Although his facial appearance was ordinary, he wore a menacing expression. His magic power fluctuations far exceeded that of his four allies and appeared to be late Core Formation. The other four were merely early Core Formation cultivators, but they gazed at the Exquisite Sound Sect cultivators with rage all the same.

“Who are you to dare slaughter the disciples of our Hidden Fiend Sect? We must repay this debt of blood!” His expression grew dark after seeing that there weren’t many of his disciples left.

The others were stunned. These bandits had no idea why they had come to pay them a visit and they actually spoke so boldly and righteously.

A few of the more quick witted individuals couldn’t help but look towards Fairy Violet Spirit, Lady Fan, and Zhuo Ruting with slight hesitation.

Fairy Violet Spirit clear, beautiful eyes revealed a trace of doubt and thought to say something before she was interrupted by a shout, “Stop your nonsense! You’ve committed crimes that cannot be repaid even with death!” Elder Zhao who had been closely following Lady Fan suddenly flew out from the crowd and waved his arm, releasing a three meter long streak of fiery light towards the enemy.

The middle-aged cultivator furiously grimaced and released an ash-gray devilish Qi with a boom. The huge forty-meter-tall aura of ash-gray Qi formed a huge misty ghost face in an instant.

As soon as the ghost face came into existence, it opened its mouth and fiercely charged forward.

Elder Zhao's attack had disappeared within the huge mouth of the ghost face. The ghost face then charged towards Elder Zhao without pause.

Suddenly, Elder Zhao revealed panic and quickly blurred several times, returning to the group of allied cultivators at a speed much faster than when he had left them. He loudly yelled, "Everyone, act together! He is a late Core Formation cultivator. We don't stand a chance if we fight alone!"

These obviously inciting words caused two Core Formation cultivators and a portion of the Foundation Establishment cultivators to immediately release their magic tools and treasures to strike the ghost face.

However, a majority of them detachedly gazed on with doubt. The scene appeared somewhat messy.

Having seen this, Han Li's face slightly twitched, and he slowly slipped towards the back of the crowd along with Crooked Soul. The situation appeared discouraging. Although he didn't know what was about to happen, Han Li thought to immediately distance himself from the coming danger.

“Don’t yet act! There is something strange about it!” The violet-clothed woman saw that something was amiss and coldly scolded the Exquisite Sound Sect disciples. However, the attacking Exquisite Sound Sect cultivators seemed to have ignored her and continued their focused attacks on the ghost face.

When Han Li saw this, his expression slightly shifted, and his heart felt heavy.

The enemy middle-aged cultivator wasn’t foolish and also saw that something was queer.

After some slight surprise, he decisively waved his hand towards the ghost head, causing it to release a strange hiss. It then opened its mouth and spat out countless ashen spheres of light. The magic tools and treasures that they struck suddenly swayed with instability. He took advantage of this opportunity to have the ghost head fly back towards him.

The attacking cultivators were stunned and didn’t dare to separate from the group to continue their attack.

“Can someone tell me what is going on?” Taking advantage of this opportunity, Fairy Violet Spirit flew out from the group and coldly asked while she stood in between both sides.

“What’s going on? You killed my sect disciples without cause and you ask their sect master?” The middle-aged man coldly said. His eyes had already turned to a shade of a peculiar dark green.

The violet-clothed woman emotionlessly met his gaze as she slowly asked, “Were you the ones who robbed our Exquisite Sound Sect and killed our sect master?”

The middle aged man responded with a furious tone, “Preposterous! Our Hidden Fiend School has always had very few dealings with outsiders. Why would we do such a contemptuous thing?”

When the violet-clothed woman heard this, she grew silent and her eyes became ice-cold.

When the others heard this, they seemed to realize something, and their expressions became strange.

Lady Fan suddenly emerged from the group and slowly proclaimed, “It seems that we’ve fallen into someone’s trap!”

“Humph! Was it you that have fallen into a trap or was it us?” The middle-aged man eerily spoke with a resentful expression.

The disciples that he had spent such a great number of years nurturing had all died within a day. It was impossible for him to not feel vehement hatred towards them.

Were it not for the fact that the Exquisite Sound Sect possessed too many Core Formation cultivators and the uncertainty he held towards the strange cultivator within the black cloud, he would’ve

used the entirety of his strength to heavily wound them despite knowing he had fallen into someone else's trap.

As the violet-clothed woman's gaze became completely void of emotion, Lady Fan waited from the side with a bitter smile.

“Elder Zhao, Elder Fu. How about you give us an explanation?” Fairy Violet Spirit slowly turned around and focused her attention on two people within the group.

Chapter 405: Greater Possession Technique

Following Fairy Violet Spirit's chilling words, the other cultivators focused their gazes towards where Elder Zhao and a middle-aged confucian scholar expressionlessly stood. The confucian scholar was another elder of the Exquisite Sound Sect that normally accompanied Zhuo Ruting at her side.

When this occurred, Lady Fan and Zhou Ruting thought of something and their expressions became extremely unsightly. Lady Fan's complexion was the worse of the two, and she appeared both flustered and exasperated.

"Who is secretly spying over there?!" Eccentric Scarletflame suddenly shouted furiously. He then released a series of fiery lightning bolts from his cloud, which attacked a nearby area as if they were living snakes.

An originally desolate area suddenly darkened and a vast amount of black Qi bursted out, completely consuming the fiery lightning. A short youth then appeared in the aftermath.

'Wu Chou!' Han Li, who had stealthily retreated to the group's rear, inwardly shouted this name upon seeing the youth.

At that moment, many of the other cultivators recognized the youth and also cried out in alarm. The members of the Hidden Fiend Sect fiercely stared at Wu Chou with even greater alarm. However, when the middle-aged sect leader saw Wu Chou, he wore a queer expression and revealed a faint trace of fear.

“Hehe! As expected of the famed Eccentric Scarletflame, you’re capable of seeing through this young master’s secret concealment technique.” Wu Chou swept his gaze past the other cultivators without a care and set his sights on the black cloud.

“Humph!” The black cloud snorted and didn’t say anything further, causing Wu Chou’s expression to darken.

“With you here, I don’t suppose this is a scheme by Zenith Yin Island?” Zhuo Ruting finally spoke after discovering that something was amiss.

“That’s right! This matter was planned by this young master. The valuables of your Exquisite Sound Sect were plundered by my sect’s men and your two elders were under my orders to shift the blame to the Hidden Fiend Sect!”

This was beyond their expectations! Wu Chou didn’t have any intention of concealing his plans and admitted to everything with a sneer. In addition, his eyes shifted around the violet-clothed woman’s body obscenely.

The violet-clothed woman merely looked emotionlessly back at Wu Chou in silence.

At that moment, Elder Zhao, the confucian scholar, and the cultivators that had just attacked suddenly flew towards Wu Chou’s side, joining Wu Chou in a three sided confrontation against Fairy Violet Spirit and the Hidden Fiend Sect.

Although Fairy Violet Spirit and Zhuo Ruting had long guessed the truth, their expressions still became far more serious.

“Elder Zhao, Elder Meng, our sect has always treated you two well. Why have you done this?” With a pale, bloodless complexion, Lady Fan couldn’t help but shout this out as Elder Zhao and the others flew towards their side.

In order to rival Zhuo Ruting in the Exquisite Sound Sect, she had spent great amounts of effort to rope Elder Zhao in, to the point of even using her own body. But now that he had abandoned her without a word, she was overcome with fury and alarm.

Elder Zhao’s face twitched and he stiffly said, “Left Envoy Fan, this old man didn’t want to do this. However, both of our lives have fallen into their hands. We had no choice in the matter!”

Lady Fan was stunned for a moment and raised her eyebrows, wanting to say something more. However, she was interrupted by Fairy Violet Spirit’s cold voice, “Senior Martial Sister Fan, there is no point in talking. Since the enemy dared to ensnare us, they are certain to have a backer. Let us put this off for later and escape from this calamity first.”

Wu Chou lecherously stared at the violet-clothed woman’s concealed face and clicked his tongue, saying, “Fairy Violet Spirit is indeed worthy of being called peerless. This young master has admired you for quite some time. Would you be interested in marrying this young master? Although this young master has

many concubines, I have yet to decide on my main wife.”

Fairy Violet Spirit said, “Yes, that’d be acceptable!”

Han Li and the others were all greatly startled by these words.

After a moment of surprise, Wu Chou then bewilderingly asked, “Is Young Lady Wang serious?”

Fairy Violet Spirit answered with a chilling voice. “If you execute all the cultivators that killed my mother, then I will marry you!”

Wu Chou’s happy expression disappeared and he shook his head with a frown, “I cannot do that! Many of my grandfather’s trusted aides acted on that day, and I simply do not have the power to execute them. Would Fairy Violet Spirit like to change her condition?”

Fairy Violet Spirit then coldly laughed and whispered something to Lady Fan at her side, ignoring Wu Chou.

Wu Chou’s extremely ugly face flashed with cruelty, but after some thought, he suppressed his fury and turned his gaze to one of the cultivators from the Hidden Fiend Sect.

“Martial Uncle Sun, I didn’t expect to see you after so many years. I offer you my sincerest congratulations on nurturing so many disciples!”

“Martial Uncle?” Wu Chou’s proclamation greatly startled the others.

Han Li felt his heart thump with great unease. He spread his spiritual sense all around but didn’t discover an ambush. He was currently hesitant, not knowing whether he should flee or stay to see how the situation developed. After all, he still didn’t know whether or not the matter of the “Heaven Lightning Bamboo” was forfeit.

At that moment, the middle-aged man coldly snorted and replied with an incessantly shifting expression, “I am well! I truly didn’t expect to be discovered by your men after taking my disciples out for an exercise. It seems things have gone quite wrong.”

Wu Chou gazed at the middle aged man with a trace of insatiable greed and said, “Hehe! Martial Uncle Sun is quite funny. Who would go to the Heavenmist Seas for several tens of years and be out for a mere exercise. Martial Uncle Sun most likely went out for a matter regarding Heavenvoid Hall! During that year, those many Martial Uncles took the ruined Heavenvoid Map with them. Perhaps Martial Uncle is carrying it with him. The three hundredth year for Heavenvoid Hall’s emergence is nearing. However, if Martial Uncle takes the initiative to hand it over to Martial Nephew, then I will personally beg for mercy on your behalf to my Martial Ancestor to spare your life.”

Having heard these coercing words, the middle-aged man grew silent for a moment before coldly replying, “We were once his disciples. How could I not know of Old Devil Zenith Yin’s

methods? If we give you the map, he'll sadistically move to slaughter us regardless. Furthermore..."

Wu Chou asked with a frown, "Furthermore?"

"Did you really think that you are enough by yourself? Old Freak, you no longer need to hide. Quickly, show yourself!" The middle-aged man grimly said.

After hearing those words, Han Li and the other cultivators were greatly startled and hurriedly looked in every direction. Could it be that Grandmaster Zenith Yin was here?"

However, their surroundings were still calm and nothing strange occurred. The crowd of cultivators then looked at the middle-aged man and Wu Chou with bewilderment.

"What're you trying to do? How am I not enough..." Wu Chou started to talk after he recovered from his amazement, but halfway through, his expression grew sluggish, and his expression revealed a trace of peculiarity.

After staring at the middle-aged man for a moment, he let out a strange laugh and said, "Not bad, not bad at all! It's no wonder why you were the disciple I most regarded during that time. You were actually able to see through the identity of this old man!"

After this was said, Wu Chou's face began to vaguely distort. A short moment later, he had become a thin, ugly old man with

squinted eyes, much to everyone's amazement.

Afterwards, Han Li and company felt a cold chill down their back.

“Greater Possession Technique! Now I know why you had entrusted such an important affair to a Junior. You had personally come, despite not being in your own body.” The middle aged man nervously gazed at the old man.

“Dear disciple, do you still dare to act against your teacher?” Without moving his lips, the newly emerged old man spoke with a sharp voice coming from his abdomen. As the noise caused the cultivator's inner ears to ache dully, they involuntarily recoiled back.

“Humph! Disciple? That year, you thought to kill us all without giving us a single moment to explain. You killed many of us and even refined their souls. Did you ever regard us as disciples? Or did you only see us as slaves? Moreover, you are only making use of a possession technique. At best, you will only be able to make use of a third of your cultivation. I have nothing to fear from you!” The middle-aged man words were scornful. He then waved his hands, causing his ghost head to swell and appear even more sinister and fearful.

All of the cultivators present were shaken by this bizarre situation and their expressions were all different!

The old man didn't grow furious. Instead, he insipidly said,

“That’s right. Were it a hundred years ago, you’d be correct! It would’ve been quite difficult to capture you alive with a third of my cultivation. But now...”

He then revealed a derisive sneer.

Chapter 406: Heavenwide Corpsefire

The spirit in the middle-aged man's eyes dimmed, and he revealed an expression of disbelief.

“Could it be that you refined the Devilish Art?” His voice carried a hint of terror.

“You’ve guessed quite well. If you obediently give yourself up, I will give you a method of survival. Otherwise... well, you already know, don’t you?” While the old man said this, he raised his hand and with a boom, a sphere of flames as black as ink appeared in his palm.

“Heavenwide Corpsefire! You’ve finally refined it.” The middle-aged man's face grew beyond pale, and his voice became hoarse from terror.

Grandmaster Zenith Yin sneered and suddenly turned towards the Exquisite Sound Sect, proudly saying, “My mood is quite good today. Thus, I will give you a way to survive! You only have to swear your allegiance to Zenith Yin Island, and you can continue to live freely. However, you all must follow my commands obediently or else your souls will be scattered. I will have you all seal a third of your primal soul into these soul restriction medallions before you leave.” With that said, he took out many pitch-black wooden medallions and coldly glared at the group.

When the other cultivators heard this, they looked at each other in dismay. Everybody stood in place, neither taking the initiative

to grab the medallion nor putting up any brave words of refusal. They merely looked at him in absolute silence.

Aside from Han Li and Crooked Soul, there were three other Core Formation cultivators on the side of the Exquisite Sound Sect: Eccentric Scarletfire who was invited by Fairy Violet Spirit, cultivator Meng, and the man with the aquiline nose that was invited by Zhuo Ruting. As for the others, including Fairy Violet Spirit and Lady Fan, they consisted of seven late Foundation Establishment cultivators.

As for Eccentric Scarletflame who remained hidden in his black cloud, he had already silently released the three Hidden Fiend cultivators and stayed silent.

Zenith Yin's expression darkened and he eerily said, "It seems you wish for both your body and soul to be extinguished. Fine! This Grandmaster will fulfill your desires!"

As soon as this was said, the cultivator with a aquiline nose behind Zhuo Ruting suddenly flew away in a streak of yellow light. Under Zhuo Ruting's furious gaze, he flew a hundred meters away in the blink of an eye and coldly snorted, "Humph! Since I hold neither any desire to fight against great master nor to be controlled, I will be taking my leave."

After this was said, the yellow streak flew another hundred meters further at an impressive speed.

When Grandmaster Zenith Yin saw this, his eyes released an

ominous glint. He lightly waved the hand containing the black fireball towards the yellow streak, causing the black fireball to flash several times and turn into a thin black streak that quickly vanished without a trace.

The others were baffled, but when Han Li saw this, his expression tensed up.

An instant later, a miserable scream came from the yellow streak, and with a clang, the yellow streak turned into ball of demonic black flame. The flame soon faded away to reveal nothing aside from a pitch black throwing knife magic treasure.

Han Li let out a breath of cold air. Those black flames were too fast to avoid!

He pondered whether or not he could avoid the attack, given he had distance and a concentrated mind. But even at a distance of a kilometer, he would have no method of dodging them.

In addition, the intensity of those black flames were absolute and entirely superior to the “Azure Yang Devilfire” he had previously seen; it wasn’t something a common magic treasure was capable of blocking.

Knowing that his life could soon end at the mere whim of this expert, Han Li’s mouth grew dry and his heart slammed with intensity.

It took a majority of his self control to prevent him from bolting away at that instant. He clearly understood that if he were to act blindly, he would only be hastening to his end.

However, giving the enemy a third of his primal soul was a price Han Li was incapable of paying; it would be equivalent to handing over his life.

So long as the soul restriction medallion was crushed, the affected cultivator would become an idiot at best, and live the rest of their life with the mind of an infant. At worst, they would go insane and perish.

In addition, these vicious primal soul restriction techniques were something that could only be performed by a Nascent Soul cultivator.

Han Li forcefully suppressed his panic and looked at the others to see whether or not they had a good plan.

When the nearby Core Formation cultivator Meng felt Han Li look at him, he only bitterly smiled and shook his head before gloomily turning his gaze back towards Grandmaster Zenith Yin.

At the front, Fairy Violet Spirit's expression remained clear and cold. But behind her, ten strings of white jade were intertwined and slightly twisted, leaving Han Li dumbfounded.

As for the other cultivators of the Exquisite Sound Sect, their

complexions became bloodlessly pale after witnessing the might of the black devilflame. Although their expressions were calm, their eyes contained inconcealable terror.

Han Li licked his lips and brought his gaze towards the cultivators of the Hidden Fiend School.

After recovering from the awe of witnessing the might of the black devilflame, the middle-aged man squinted his eyes.

When Han Li looked at him, the middle-aged man said in a deep voice, “Do not provoke the old devil. Since he is possessing another’s body, he can only refine those flames a few times at most; otherwise, the possessed body will burn away and perish. Right now, we can only act together to get rid of the old devil.”

As the middle-aged man said this, he turned his gaze towards Eccentric Scarletflame’s black cloud. In his mind, he would only be able to fight against Grandmaster Zenith Yin if he joined forces with the Late Core Formation Eccentric Scarletflame.

However, there was no response from the black cloud. This strange occurrence caused Han Li and the others to become nervous.

Fairy Violet Spirit in particular gazed at the black cloud with icy intensity.

At that moment, Grandmaster Zenith Ying coldly laughed and

clasped his hands together. After separating them, two more black fireballs appeared in his hands. Everyone's complexion abruptly changed as they all stared at the black fireballs.

At that moment, the black cloud started to roll, and Eccentric Scarletflame's faint, hoarse voice could be heard, "Grandmaster Zenith Yin, do you wish for me to surrender to you?"

"Of course! Since I've personally arrived here via possession, everyone present must either recognize me as their master or die! There will be no exceptions." Grandmaster Zenith Yin indifferently replied, looking at the black cloud.

"Good! Good! Even with a trifling possessed body, you actually dare to take on this island lord! It seems I'll have to test the power of your esteemed self's devilfire!" Eccentric Scarletflame flew into a rage from humiliation and the black cloud rumbled with increasing intensity with sounds of fierce thunder ringing out.

Seeing that the talks had collapsed, the Exquisite Sound Sect and the Hidden Fiend School cultivators inwardly let out a breath of relief. Since the Eccentric was on their side, they still had a fighting chance.

After all, Eccentric Scarletflame's Water Sunflower Devilish Art was extremely well-known in the Scattered Star Seas. It may prove to be able to subdue this Devilfire!

Fairy Violet Spirit suddenly asked, "Senior Zenith Yin, are you not afraid of the Star Palace coming to knock on your door due to

your unrestrained use of the soul restriction technique? To the best of my knowledge, the two Heavenly Star Sages strictly forbid Nascent Soul experts such as yourself from using them.”

Although Grandmaster Zenith Yin was an old Nascent Soul devil, his expression slightly changed upon hearing the Star Palace and the Heavenly Star Sages being mentioned.

However, he immediately recovered his calm and coldly chuckled, “It seems this girl knows quite a bit! However, the Star Palace’s ban was only a matter of the past. Do you really believe that the Heavenly Star Sages dare to casually leave Heavenly Star City? Without them acting, the Star Palace has no way of enforcing those restrictions!”

Those words stunned Han Li and the others like lightning striking from a clear sky. Only the cultivators from the Hidden Fiend Sect showed no surprise; it seemed they already knew of this.

Fairy Violet Spirit’s heart grew sullen, but soon after, she decisively shouted in a cold voice towards the middle-aged man, “Deal with the old devil with Eccentric Scarletflame and have the others take care of the traitors. Afterwards, we will take on the old devil together!”

The middle-aged man was slightly surprised, but he immediately understood and waved his arm towards his subordinates, ordering, “Follow her instructions for the time being. If we do not strike down the old devil, none of us will survive.”

Afterwards, he stared at Grandmaster Zenith Yin with a mask of frost as Eccentric Scarletflame's black cloud arrived above him with a blur.

The Hidden Fiend Sect's Core Formation cultivators looked at each other before wordlessly flying towards the Exquisite Sound Sect cultivator's side, coldly staring at the traitors.

Without the fear of facing Zenith Yin's frightening devilfire, the Exquisite Sound Sect cultivators' expressions greatly improved, taking out their magic tools and treasures in preparation for combat.

But Han Li, who stood at the back of the crowd, stiffly frowned.

For some unknown reason, the current circumstances gave him an extremely unpleasant feeling, as if a disaster were about to occur. Something felt wrong to him. But can Grandmaster Zenith Yin take them all on by relying on the Greater Possession Technique?

He licked his dry lips before thinking for a moment. Then, he quietly gave Crooked Soul a few orders and spat out his Green Brilliance Dagger.

Chapter 407: Betrayal

“Go!” The middle-aged man uttered in a low voice. After forming an incantation gesture with his hands, the ghost head bared its fangs and fiercely charged towards Grandmaster Zenith Yin while screaming.

That same moment, Han Li and the others shot their magic tools and treasures at the Exquisite Sound Sect traitors.

Naturally, those at Grandmaster Zenith Yin’s side hadn’t resigned themselves to death and unleashed their own barrage of brilliant light. In the next moment, all kinds of magic tools and treasures intertwined with one another.

Zenith Yin indifferently glanced at the scene before turning towards the ghost head flying at him, revealing a cold smile.

He shot the two black fireballs in his hand towards it. After leaving his hands, the fireballs underwent a series of transformations until becoming inky snakes as thick as a thumb. Then with a woosh, they pierced into the ghost head’s mouth like an arrow.

The middle-aged man’s face suddenly paled, and he inwardly cried out in alarm.

The ghost head suddenly stopped and it began to swell before suddenly rupturing, releasing countless threads of black flame.

After the middle-aged man saw this, his complexion somewhat paled, but he immediately took in a deep breath and wore a resolute expression.

He slapped the back of his head with all his strength and a thumb-sized bead slowly emerged from his forehead. The bead was made of an exquisite pure white crystal and released a cold white aura.

After the bead fully emerged, the middle-aged man secretly transmitted his voice to Eccentric Scarletflame with a solemn expression, “Brother Scarlet, the old devil’s Heavenwide Corpsefire can only be restrained by the cold of an extreme Yin magic treasure. I’ll use the Dark Cold Bead to capture his attention while you find an opportunity to trap the old devil using your Water Sunflower Devilish Arts. This way, we’ll have a greater chance of victory.”

With a muffled grunt coming from the black cloud in response, the middle-aged man’s spirits were roused.

Without any hesitation, he opened his mouth and sprayed a mist of blood onto the bead, which began to spin and absorb the entirety of the blood mist. Its white aura contracted and expanded before transforming it into a huge, three-meter-wide silver sphere that shined with blinding light.

“Old Devil, I’ll show you the ferocity of my Dark Cold Bead that I refined from profound deep sea crystal!” The middle-aged man

gazed at Grandmaster Zenith Yin with a malicious expression and grit his teeth.

Soon after, he pointed his hand towards the Dark Cold Bead and shouted, “Swiftly!” The silver light sphere swayed several times and released a clear hum before transforming into a white python with the thickness of a bowl. The python then fiercely pounced towards Grandmaster Zenith Yin.

“Yi!” Grandmaster Zenith Yin revealed slight astonishment! But soon after, his disdainful smile reappeared on his face. With a slight tremble of his shoulders, eight bowl-thick wisps of black Qi emerged from behind him.

The wisps of black Qi were extremely agile. As they floated in the air, they transformed into wolf type demonic beasts and charged towards the white python with bared fangs and claws.

The middle-aged man watched this with raised eyebrows and then loudly shouted as he continuously moved his hands. Streaks of multi-colored incantation seals flew from his hands and landed on the body of the white python.

The python’s eyes suddenly flashed with green light. It coiled its body and silently spouted out a thick white mist of ice, causing the the black mist wolves to disappear without a trace. Afterwards, the mist relentlessly continued to approach Grandmaster Zenith Yin.

Grandmaster Zenith Yin finally revealed some surprise. Still, he merely waved a hand in front of his body and summoned a thick

black wall of light from the ground with a boom, blocking the white mist.

Seeing that the cold white mist had completely occupied Grandmaster Zenith Yin's attention, the middle-aged man hastily sent a voice transmission towards Eccentric Scarletflame, "Brother Scarlet, act now!"

"Alright!" Eccentric Scarletflame responded without any hesitation.

A short moment after the middle-aged man's roar, the black cloud quickly swelled and started to wildly roll before releasing deafening thunderclaps, bolts of lightning bursting underneath it.

"Eccentric Scarletflame, you..." The middle-aged man yelled out with an aghast expression before being enveloped in a hundred meters of inescapable black clouds.

At that moment, Eccentric Scarletflame cackled strangely. A huge black hand suddenly shot out from the cold white mist and grabbed ahold of the white python, causing it to disperse and return back into the form of a bead.

However, it still did its utmost to flicker without end while inside the large hand's grasp as if it were unwilling to give up.

At the same time, the middle-aged man's furious roar could be heard among the clangs of thunder, "Old Devil, Scarletflame! You

bastards were working together!” His voice was filled with bitter resentment and regret.

“Humph! It was just that you were too stupid. Play with Scarletflame for now! I will take care of the others first before coming back to chat with you about the matters between a master and his disciple!” After indifferently speaking those words, the large black hand faded away to reveal Grandmaster Zenith Yin.

After giving a cold glance to the black cloud, he brought his gaze towards the Dark Cold Bead in his hand, opened his mouth, and spat a dull mist of black Qi over it. The stained bead immediately lost its brilliance and darkened.

Grandmaster Zenith Yin appeared content, and with a flip of his hand, the bead disappeared without a trace.

Despite the long description, Eccentric Scarletflame’s sudden betrayal and Grandmaster Zenith Yin’s disposal of the Dark Cold Bead had occurred in only the blink of an eye. However, these events had left the others dumbstruck even as they were on the verge of victory.

Fairy Violet Spirit revealed an even greater appearance of incredulity!

A majority of the cultivators immediately realized something. After exchanging a mutual glance, they immediately put away the magic treasures and tools they were using to suppress the traitors and scattered, fleeing without a word.

They weren't idiots. Under the current circumstances, they would surely die without having their corpses intact. They scattered in every direction and left themselves to the mercy of fate. The quickest ones were obviously the Core Formation cultivators.

What was most astonishing was that Fairy Violet Spirit, Lady Fan, and Zhuo Ruting had made use of an unknown secret technique. Jointly making use of a stone tablet magic tool to turn themselves into a streak of tri-colored light no slower than the Core Formation cultivators.

As for the quickest among them, it was naturally the two that had slipped away first, Han Li and Crooked Soul. As soon as Eccentric Scarletflame betrayed the middle-aged man, Han Li and Crooked Soul had retrieved their magic treasures and wordlessly fled as streaks of green and yellow light.

Just as the other cultivators had thought to flee, Han Li had already fled over a hundred meters away. But when he turned his head to see what had resulted, Han Li was amazed and rejoiced at the sight.

Not all of the Hidden Fiend Sect's Core Formation cultivators had fled. The four that had appeared with the middle-aged man had joined hands in a violent assault against Eccentric Scarletflame and Grandmaster Zenith Yin. With expressions of heart-chilling fury, they attacked without any intention of preserving their own lives, leaving the two devils flustered and unable to free themselves.

“Good! Good! I didn’t think that those people were actually your Fiend Core Doppelgangers. I will be sure to make them whole!”

This attack seemed to have greatly angered Grandmaster Zenith Yin and he abruptly laughed from rage. Suddenly, one of the four Core formation cultivators let out a miserable wail before he combusted into a ball of raging black fire and turned to ash.

Han Li felt his heart tremble and no longer dared to look, focusing instead on speeding forward on his Green Brilliance Dagger.

But still, he couldn’t help but look at Crooked Soul with a strange expression. After hearing the words, ‘Fiend Core’ and ‘Doppelganger’, the doubts clouding his mind had finally been cleared up.

He had originally suspected the Wu Chou’s “Great Profound Ying Technique” had some relationship with the “Profound Yin Scripture” contained inside the Emperor of Yue’s jade slip. Now, his suspicions had finally been confirmed.

As for why they were present in both the Heavenly South Region and the Scattered Star Seas, he reckoned they had been transported by an ancient transportation formation, most likely through the very one he had used.

Now that he thought about it, the rainbow skeleton beside the ancient transportation formation raised a huge question.

As for his earlier premonitions, Eccentric Scarletflame's betrayal during the battle was far beyond what he had expected. His first fight after achieving Core Formation had ended up just like the difficult situations he had found himself in while he was in Foundation Establishment, leaving him with no choice but to flee for his life as before.

Feeling great bitterness in his heart, Han Li became beyond gloomy. However, he found this situation to be quite similar to when he had killed the Infant Carp Beast. It should've been a close battle between both sides, but in the end, traitors had appeared and ended up massacring their former allies.

With that in mind, he couldn't help but recall the medallion engraved in the shape of a sinister ghost head. He felt that everything seemed to have a relation to it.

That was all that came to Han Li's mind before his thoughts were interrupted by two wretched screams behind him, causing his heart to tense up.

As of current, he could only hope that Grandmaster Zenith Yin's great arrogance would somehow allow him to escape as he hadn't set up any contingency plans beforehand.

Chapter 408: Demon Corpse

Just as Han Li was lost in thought, his expression changed, and he stopped in the sky with Crooked Soul.

The originally empty area ahead of him had suddenly become vaguely distorted. With a hum, a human-like demon climbed out of the distortion and smiled at them, revealing its vicious, rotten teeth.

“What!?” Han Li couldn’t help but shout upon seeing this.

Its body was dark green and covered in shiny, black armor. While it was unarmed, it had extremely sharp, inch-long fingernails.

‘A refined corpse?’ The strong, putrid smell of a corpse came from the demon, allowing Han Li to recognize its true identity, much to his dismay.

From its appearance, it couldn’t possibly be the low grade “Armored Corpse”. It was most likely a corpse refined by Grandmaster Zenith Yin using some extraordinary method.

With that in mind, Han Li waved his hand, causing his Green Brilliance Dagger to transform into a ten meter long flood dragon and fiercely charge forward. At the same time, Crooked Soul silently raised his finger and shot out a fine beam of bloody light that faded away in the blink of an eye, a Blood Spirit Drill that Crooked Soul had arduously refined..

With the sound of a splatter, the Blood Spirit Drill pierced through the refined corpse's lower chest and left a small hole, causing the refined corpse to look down at it in surprise.

Han Li rejoiced and willed the green flood dragon to follow through.

The flood dragon scattered into green brilliance, throwing the refined corpse back by ten meters. The corpse then let out a low roar and immediately stood up, glancing at Han Li with an ominous glint.

‘Not good! This refined corpse isn’t affected by the attacks of common magic treasures?’ Han Li hastily recalled his Green Brilliance Dagger with a sunken heart.

The corpse was completely unaffected by Han Li's strike. Even the small wound it received from the Blood Spirit Drill was healing at a visible rate.

Han Li's expression darkened and he joined together with Crooked Soul, flying out in a single streak of light, wanting to slip past the side of the corpse.

Han Li wasn't scared of any danger the refined corpse may pose to him, but the time it would take away would allow Grandmaster Zenith Yin to catch up to him. Han Li stole a glance behind him afterwards. He saw that the other fleeing cultivators were also blocked by a great number of refined corpses.

As Han Li's heart trembled, he and Crooked Soul propelled their streak of light using the entirety of their power, soon passing the refined corpse.

The eyes of the corpse then flashed with green light, and its body suddenly blurred, disappearing from sight!

Seeing this incredibly familiar scene, Han Li suddenly dodged to the side out of reflex, dodging a five clawed streak of black swordlight. The attack whistled past him until it dispersed about forty meters away.

Han Li inhaled a breath of cold air and turned his head away from the swordlight. As expected, the refined corpse was standing not far behind him with two sharp claws, extended by several inches of black light.

What speed! The corpse had traveled no less than a hundred meters from its original location in a mere instant!

That was nearly as fast and stealthy as Han Li's own movements when he used the Shifting Smoke Steps on land! The demon had even used it in the air! That was truly beyond reason.

Han Li's complexion grew ashen.

He knew that he would no longer be able to escape from the refined corpse. Was this the reason why Grandmaster Zenith Yin

had so calmly ignored them as they fled?

Now knowing this, Han Li's expression grew harsh and he patted his storage pouch. In an instant, a hundred azure lights along with two red lights flew out, densely surrounding him.

After the lights faded away, two Bloodjade Spiders and over a hundred of huge, six-meter-tall azure apes were revealed. The huge apes raised their arms as soon as they appeared and shot out ten beams of azure light from their fingers towards the refined corpse, encompassing the sky in light beams.

Unable to avoid such a dense barrage of attacks, the demon corpse's eye gave off a vicious glint, and it spat out a ball of black Qi to face the barrage of fine azure beams of light. He then crossed his arms in front of his body to block the attack and closely followed after the black Qi.

The black Qi managed to disperse a majority of the azure light, but those that managed to strike its body merely dispersed into azure smoke and scattered radiance. The demon corpse revealed a trace of a grimace, slightly baring its teeth before taking tyrannical strides toward the huge apes.

With a series of cracks, a few of the nearby puppets were ripped apart by the claws of black light. Han Li frowned upon seeing this and Crooked Soul immediately released a hundred meter high blood light and condensed it into a huge blood-red saber before fiercely chopping down towards the refined corpse.

Clang. The blood saber chopped down onto the demon corpse's head, but it produced only the sound of struck metal, seemingly unable to be damaged by the slashes. The slash appeared to have only attracted the corpse's fury. It grabbed the blood saber with one hand and swung down the other as if wanting to destroy the saber to vent its fury.

Han Li couldn't help but reveal calm joy at the sight!

With an incantation gesture, Crooked Soul's blood saber turned into violet flames. In an instant, the refined corpse was engulfed in wild flames, causing it to shriek out in panic and flap its hands onto its body.

However, the demon corpse quickly discovered that although the violet flames were difficult to extinguish, they didn't cause it any injuries and could be ignored. It then sought to find the culprit of the flames.

But as soon as it raised its head, two huge white nets silently covered it, sturdily entrapping it as it was caught unaware. They were the spiderwebs of the Bloodjade spiders.

The demon corpse was greatly alarmed and hastily attempted to break free with all of its strength, but at this same time, the purple flames turned into a bowl-thick serpent of purple flames and firmly wrapped around its body.

With the spider webs and the flame serpent binding its body, it would be unable to escape for a while.

Then without the slightest hesitation, Han Li and Crooked Soul turned into a streak of light, retrieved his spiders and puppets, and immediately flew off without any thoughts of looking behind them.

If he hadn't heard incorrectly, there had been a third wretched scream from Grandmaster Zenith's direction. If he didn't take the opportunity to escape now, he'd definitely turn into the old devil's slave.

Han Li's and Crooked Soul's joined powers allowed them to fly over fifty kilometers away in a single breath. After shifting their direction several times, they came across a small nameless island.

The two immediately descended onto the island and buried themselves over forty meters deep. They then wrapped themselves with the aura severing muslin cloth and used the nameless incantation to restrain their Qi.

Even after performing all of this, Han Li still felt apprehensive, not knowing if he would be able to escape detection from the two devil's spiritual sense. After all, a Nascent Soul cultivator was certain to have far greater spiritual sense than an average Core Formation cultivator.

Unfortunately, Han Li had no way of knowing that over fifty kilometers away, Grandmaster Zenith Yin was standing in his original position with a leisurely expression, seeming to have given up his chase on the runaways. Additionally, there was a large red-

robed, purple-faced man next to him along with over a dozen dark-green refined corpses.

In front of Grandmaster Zenith Yin and the purple-faced man was an unconscious middle-aged man floating in midair; he was being held up by strange needles emitting blue light that were stabbed into his body.

As for Elder Zhao and the others, they were behind the two, prostrated with fear, not daring to breathe too loudly. Even the Core Formation cultivators lacked the slightest trace of pride.

“I truly didn’t expect that Violet Spirit girl would actually escape! I had originally thought to hand her over to Fellow Daoist Scarletflame. It seems we’ll only be able to look for an opportunity in the future!” Grandmaster Zenith Yin said with a calm expression.

“Please don’t be disheartened, Senior Wu. Although that Violet Spirit girl is among the top ten furnace cauldrons I would consider, your grandson seems to have taken quite an interest in her. How about we leave her for him?” The large, purple-faced man chuckled.

“Then many thanks to Fellow Daoist Scarletflame! After we return, I’ll send twenty acceptable female cultivators to Turtle Source Island as compensation. Besides, your master can be considered my Senior. Please send him my respects!” After Grandmaster Zenith Yin heard this, his face revealed a rarely seen trace of a smile.

“Senior, I also haven’t seen my master for quite some time. If I see him, I will definitely mention you.” Eccentric Scarletflame spoke with an extremely polite tone before rolling his eyes and continued, “However, now that the Violet Spirit girl has escaped, she may contact the Star Palace. Are there any problems we should worry about?” Scarletflame revealed a trace of worry.

“The Star Palace? Hehe! There are no problems to be had.” Grandmaster Zenith Yin casually sneered.

“As far as I know, the Heavenly Star Palace’s elders are all in seclusion. Currently, they definitely won’t deal with any minor, trivial matters. Those two old bastards of the Star Palace are refining some technique called the Divine Essencefused Light for no reason. As a result, the two can only leave Heavenly Star City for half a month on a fixed date every year, otherwise their cultivation will greatly decline. It seems that during the next trip to the Heavenvoid Hall, we will have far less enemies to worry about.” Grandmaster Zenith Yin’s tone was laced with schadenfreude. The corner of Scarletflame’s mouth twitched.

“However, my master had mentioned this before. So long as the Heavenly Star City Sages remain in Heavenly Star City and draw the support of their essencefuses Mountain, they are an unstoppable existence. In addition, if they managed to cultivate to the great success stage of Divine Essencefused Light, they would no longer be confined to Heavenly Star City and would reign supreme in the Scattered Star Seas!” Scarletflame said with deep worry.

Chapter 409: True Appearance

“Great success stage? Heh, that’s just the two sage’s wishful thinking. They didn’t even bother to consider why no one had truly cultivated the Divine Essencefused Light despite it having been so widespread in the Scattered Star Islands for countless years. Of course, it could be considered good luck for them if an Essencefused Mountain would unknowingly emerge from the ocean floor and be transported back to Heavenly Star City. But returning to the main point, the Divine Essencefused Light is something that can only be cultivated by relying on external objects. I completely suspect that the founder of this cultivation art wrote it as a joke. What cultivation art in this world could possibly control all five elements? In addition, their cultivation of this technique is completely meaningless. Even if they don’t succeed in cultivating this technique, their cultivation realm alone already makes them an exceptional existence in this world.” Grandmaster Zenith Yin refuted.

“I hope it is as Senior says!” Although Scarletflame was still somewhat worried, he could only agree.

“As for those who escaped, there were two from the eighteen that managed to break free from the Heavenwide Corpses, in addition to Fairy Violet Spirit and her sect’s envoys. This was quite unexpected!” Grandmaster Zenith Yin revealed a peculiar gaze as he stroked his short, thin beard.

“That’s right. Fairy Violet Spirit carried her sect protecting treasure on her: the Wood Dragon Tablet. By relying on its protection, she was able to bring herself and her sect envoys to safety. However, the other two who escaped were quite strange.

From a distance, I saw that the two released a large number of human-like mechanical puppets. Although their offensive and defensive abilities were very lacking, being able to control over a hundred of them all at once was quite unusual.” Eccentric Scarletflame was also surprised and nodded his head in agreement.

“Let them be. There is no need to concern ourselves over two small fish! If I weren’t restricted by the limited amount of magic power I hold post possession, I would’ve been able to use other methods to prevent them from escaping before my eyes. Still, the most important goal has been fulfilled; the traitorous disciple has been captured. I will be bringing him back to find out where he took the ruined Heavenvoid Map.” Grandmaster Zenith Yin spoke indifferently as if he didn’t care in the slightest that Han Li and Crooked Soul had fled.

Having heard this, Eccentric Scarletflame let the matter drop. Not longer after, he said his farewells to Grandmaster Zenith Yin and flew off after turning into a black cloud.

After seeing Eccentric Scarletflame disappear into the horizon, Grandmaster Zenith Yin faintly sneered. He slowly extended his hand and relaxed his fingers, revealing a several-inch-large white ball of spiderwebs

As Zenith Yin gazed at the spidersilk, he revealed a strange, captivated expression.

“Bloodjade Spider! I truly didn’t think I’d see them again. It seems the heavens haven’t abandoned me! I still have a chance!” After Grandmaster Zenith Yin muttered to himself, he suddenly

howled with laughter as he faced the sky. Elder Zhao and the others paled in complete shock.

Grandmaster Zenith Yin abruptly stopped his hysterical laughter and loudly shouted, “Go! We’re returning to the island!” Afterwards, he grabbed hold of the floating, middle-aged cultivator and led the way back.

Han Li naturally didn’t know what had happened fifty kilometers away. He remained underground for an entire month due to his trepidation before emerging with absolute caution. After he carefully scanned the vicinity to confirm that nobody was nearby, he wordlessly flew back to Heavenly Star City with Crooked Soul.

This trip had left him greatly shaken; he had nearly lost his life. But what made him most gloomy was that he had braved this great danger without anything to show for it. He reckoned the Heaven Lightning Bamboo had fallen into the hands of Grandmaster Zenith Yin. As such, he could only return to Heavenly Star City in dejection.

Heavenly Star City was as flourishing as it had been in the past. When the Star Palace gatekeepers respectfully addressed him as Senior, Han Li was unable to feel any happiness since he had recently escaped from death and entered the city with a miserable expression.

But when he returned to his cave residence on the thirty-ninth layer, he was stunned.

A sound transmission talisman was peacefully floating outside the cave residence's restrictions.

Han Li's expression darkened as he frowned. He then took out the authority talisman and somewhat unwillingly shot out a green light from the medallion. The sound transmission talisman was enveloped by the green light and shot towards Han Li in a streak of fiery light.

Han Li then shot out a speck of white light from his finger and struck the talisman, causing it to vigorously ignite and release the beautiful voice of a woman.

Han Li was initially stunned upon hearing this, but he soon revealed anger.

That was the voice of Lady Fan! She dared to so shameless come knocking on his door despite having put him through such hardship.

The belly full of rage Han Li had been stifling since that day suddenly bursted out. His hand immediately flashed with red light and formed a fist-sized fireball, intending to throw it out and destroy the sound transmission talisman. However, the next words she said stirred Han Li's heart, and he stilled his hand.

A short moment later, Lady Fan's voice faded away. Han Li casually extinguished the fireball in his hand and grabbed his chin, sinking into deep thought.

To tell the truth, Han Li was slightly surprised that the three female cultivators were able to escape. However, he currently didn't hold the slightest goodwill towards them.

She had requested for him to meet them at some inn and raised the topic of the Heaven Lightning Bamboo, faintly speaking as if they were in possession of it. This caused Han Li to become beyond furious and his emotions to become unstable.

But in the end, Han Li decided to go see them after some more thought. He wouldn't agree to assisting them with any matters of revenge and would merely have to purchase the bamboo above the market price. He was sure that any others wouldn't regard the Heaven Lightning Bamboo as useful as it would be to him and would only consider the item to be of little interest.

After all, rare wood attribute materials were normally used as a core material for magic treasure refinement, apart from some peculiar magic treasures. After dissolving the bamboo's impurities, there wouldn't be enough leftover material to refine even a dagger as Lady Fan had described the small stalk of Heaven Lightning Bamboo to be only a few inches long.

With that thought, Han Li headed toward the inn with roused spirits.

An hour later, Han Li arrived at the Grand Flourish Inn and entered a room on the third floor along with Crooked Soul.

The inn was quite particular, as the first two floors were for

mortals and the third floor was reserved for the use of cultivators.

Han Li leisurely found the mentioned room. However, the room door was covered in a layer of faint white light. It was clear a formation had been set down as a method of detection.

Having seen this, Han Li couldn't help but reveal a trace of self-mockery. It seemed the beautiful women had been greatly startled by the recent events as well.

Han Li lightly shook his head before using his hand to shoot a speck of white light towards the restriction, causing it to release a series of ripples.

No sound came from within a room, but a short moment later, Han Li felt a wave of spiritual sense quickly fly around him and Crooked Soul before returning into the room.

Then with a flash of white light, the door's restriction disappeared. Fairy Violet Spirit's clear and cold voice then said, "So these two Seniors have arrived. Please, come in! Us sisters have been waiting for you for quite some time."

Han Li pushed the door open with a calm expression and slowly walked in with Crooked Soul in tow.

The room's arrangements were simple, and apart from a red wood table and a few tasteful rattan chairs, there were no other items. However, Han Li was shocked to find that there was an

unfamiliar woman with a languid expression in the room where the Exquisite Sect Members should have been.

The woman wore yellow clothes and had a predictably flawless, pale face with bright and clear eyes. She turned to look at Han Li with a slight smile.

After a moment of surprise, he doubtfully asked with hesitation, “You’re Miss Violet Spirit?”

Although he hadn’t seen Fairy Violet Spirit’s true appearance, he had heard that she possessed peerless beauty. Han Li blinked with slight confusion and thought, ‘Surely this isn’t her? Although this young, yellow-clothed woman was very pleasant to the eyes, it definitely didn’t match her grand reputation. Could it be this wasn’t her true appearance?’

“Senior seems shocked! Is it because Wang Ning’s true appearance causes Senior Han disappointment? Sorry to disappoint you, but this really is my true appearance!” The yellow-clothed woman saw through Han Li’s shock and indifferently spoke with a slight smile.

“True appearance?” Han Li attentively looked at the young woman’s face for a moment before wordlessly shaking his head. Although he didn’t see anything amiss with her appearance, seeing neither any illusion techniques or other alternations, he still didn’t believe that this was actually Fairy Violet Spirit’s true appearance.

After all, there were many strange treasures in this world. It

wouldn't be considered off if there were at least one or two that could mask one's true appearance and change their face to another.

Chapter 410: Elder

Fairy Violet Spirit saw Han Li's disbelief but didn't address it. Instead she turned to Crooked Soul and sweetly smiled, saying, "So Crooked Soul is Senior Han's external incarnation?"

Han Li's body grew still upon hearing this and he stared at the woman with a cold gaze for a long while before coldly asking, "How does Lady Violet Spirit know this?"

"Hehe! Senior doesn't need to be so shocked. Our sect also has a method of clone refinement. However, its costs are far too great and its rate of success is terrible. As such, it is rare for any of our sect members to use it. However, Senior's clone is quite peculiar. Normally, a clone would have far inferior cultivation. However, Senior Han's clone is also at early Core Formation. How strange!" Fairy Violet Spirit lightly smiled with bright, wandering eyes.

"Since Fairy Violet Spirit has seen through it, I won't conceal this. However, why aren't the other two fellow daoists here?" Han Li admitted this with a relaxed expression, but asked another question after looking through the room. Han Li knew that it was only a matter of time before Crooked Soul was discovered to be his clone and wasn't particularly astonished.

"Senior, please sit! My two Senior Martial Sisters went to the market city to purchase a few items and also a long-term residence in Heavenly Star City along the way." The young woman gracefully invited Han Li to take seat and gave an explanation with a gentle tone.

After taking a seat, Han Li frowned and doubtfully asked, “What? You three Fellow Daoists don’t intend to return the Exquisite Sound Sect?”

“Return to the Exquisite Sound Sect? We don’t dare! Since Zenith Yin Island became our enemy and our two great sect elders have betrayed us, we would fall into those devil’s hand were we to return. Other small and mid-level powers would also jump at the opportunity to absorb us. As such, we’ve decided to relocate the Exquisite Sound Sect to Heavenly Star City for the time being with our sects savings.” Fairy Violet Spirit sighed and bitterly smiled.

“I see.” Han Li nodded. As Han Li didn’t have much of a relationship with them, he didn’t make any excessive displays of enthusiasm.

Fairy Violet Spirit didn’t seem to care about Han Li’s response and poured a cup of tea for him instead. She then aloofly said, “When we escaped the interception of that refined corpse, we also saw Senior subdue his own, and thus knew that Senior had managed to escape. I later heard from Senior Martial Sister Fan that Senior had assisted us for the Heavenly Lightning Bamboo. As such, I had her send a sound transmission talisman to invite Senior Han for a chat.”

Han Li decided to directly address the heart of the matter and not speak in circles, “The Sound Transmission Talisman mentioned that the Heaven Lightning Bamboo was in Fellow Daoist Violet Spirit’s possession. Is this true? This item wasn’t seized by Zenith Yin Island?”

Han Li's direct inquiry left Fairy Violet Spirit widening her eyes with a trace of amusement. She answered with a smooth and beautiful voice, "Since Senior is so quick to the point, I won't push the matter off for later. Originally, our Exquisite Sound sect acquired not one stalk of Heaven Lightning Bamboo from that small sect, but two. One was stolen while the other has remained with us. If Senior wants it, this Junior is willing to give it to him."

Han Li rejoiced but his expression didn't reveal his excitement. Instead, he took a deep glance at her and asked with a deep voice, "Give? Why does Lady Violet Spirit speak such useless words? Since you've used the item to lure me here, there should naturally be some conditions involved. Tell me them, and I'll give them some consideration."

Fairy Violet Spirit was somewhat stunned, and her smile gradually disappeared. After muttering to herself for a moment, she earnestly said, "To tell the truth, the Heaven Lightning Bamboo is currently a useless item to the Exquisite Sound Sect. Due to the kindness of taking action for us in the last battle, it is only right that we give it to you. However, our sect is currently undergoing a great change, and our strength is unable to support a sect as large as the Exquisite Sound Sect. As such, in addition to this bamboo, we will give three hundred spirit stones to Senior every year if he were to take the position of guest elder at our sect. We hope you won't refuse!"

"A guest elder?" Han Li's expression slightly changed. He hadn't expected that they would make such a request.

"In addition to what was previously mentioned, if Senior's

cultivation requires any pair cultivation furnace cauldrons, our sect will gladly provide an outstanding female disciple to act as Senior's concubine." Fairy Violet Spirit calmly added.

These conditions didn't cause any change in Han Li's expression. With the assistance of spiritual medicines, he had no use for the assistance of the small amount of spiritual power that pair cultivation could provide.

However, the Heaven Lightning Bamboo was a different story. It was very likely that he wouldn't be able to find a store that had it.

After some consideration, Han Li replied, "Those conditions will not do! I have long been accustomed to being a lone agent. I do not wish to be restricted to a sect. Fellow Daoist should offer me some other conditions. If not, I am willing to purchase the item at thirty percent above its market value."

"Senior jests. What market value is there for a top grade material such as the three great divine woods. Without a purpose, it is worthless. But to a cultivator with a wood attribute cultivation technique, it is likely to be a priceless treasure." Han Li's refusal didn't surprise Fairy Violet Spirit, but she still rejected Han Li's proposal to offer spirit stones for it with a slight smile.

Han Li frowned. It seemed this woman knew he truly desired this item and she wasn't willing to let it go.

He felt extremely uncomfortable from having her hold such a crucial item hostage. However, he would never subject himself to

the will of the Exquisite Sound Sect over a stalk of Heaven Lightning Bamboo.

Just as Han Li thought about abandoning the Heaven Lightning Bamboo and refine his magic treasure using other materials, the young woman proposed a compromise.

“Since Senior is unwilling to be constricted, then how about he become the sect’s in-name elder? You can enjoy the treatment of an elder and there is no need to accept the orders of the sect master. At the very least, our sect will be able to use your reputation as a Core Formation cultivator to protect ourselves. Would Senior be willing if this were the case?”

“An in-name elder?” Fairy Violet Spirit’s blatant honesty left Han Li stunned.

“If the Exquisite Sound Sect encounters a great enemy, I won’t have to act?” He puzzlingly asked the question with an expression of disbelief.

“If our sect encounters any problems or any matters requiring Senior’s assistance, it will naturally be up to Senior’s discretion to act. Either way, we will be grateful to you!” She answered without hesitation as if she had previously considered this.

After lowering his head in thought for a moment, he raised his head and slowly said, “Fellow Daoist Violet Spirit! If I’m not mistaken, you only wish to use me as a banner to raise the Exquisite Sound Sect’s influence in order to protect yourselves

against powers that mean to harm you during your moment of weakness. After you spread this news, it will remain effective so long as it isn't proven untrue."

"Senior Han speaks true! When the time comes, we will mention Senior's position as a Core Formation cultivator. It will somewhat counteract the destructive effects of Elder Meng and Zhao's betrayal." The young woman faintly smiled and spoke of her future plans.

"If those are your conditions, then I will accept! However, I will not take the initiative to introduce myself to other cultivators as an elder of your sect. Don't count on me to put on a superficial show for your sect. It will be up to you in order to convince others that I have become an elder of your sect."

After some thought, Han Li eventually agreed as he greatly desired the Heaven Lightning Bamboo and felt that it wouldn't bring him any trouble.

"Alright, so long as Senior doesn't deny this when the time comes, I and my Senior Martial Sisters will treat you well!" The young woman spoke with an expression overflowing with happiness.

As the two had reached an agreement, Fairy Violet Spirit didn't intend to further delay its conclusion. She took out a strange box and put it on the table. The box was quite odd as it was made from neither wood, metal, nor jade type materials. The box's body was translucent, and it was surrounded in a faint layer of azure mist.

Seeing that Han Li wore a baffled expression, Fairy Violet Spirit gave an explanation in a soft voice, “This box was refined by an item known as jade paste. Although ‘jade’ is in its name, it isn’t actually made of jadestone or anything of the five elements. Only an item such as this is capable of preserving the Heaven Lightning Bamboo without fear of its Spiritual Qi leaking.”

Han Li nodded his head. Since he hadn’t heard of “Jade Paste” before, this item must clearly be a rare material and should be extremely precious.

Fairy Violet Spirit then extended a delicate, perfect finger and with a flash of light, a soybean-sized ball of green light appeared on it.

Afterwards, she lightly touched the box without the slightest hesitation. After the green light contacted the azure mist, it let out a soft crack, causing the mist of light to suddenly disappear and the box to slowly open.

With roused spirits, Han Li attentively turned his gaze towards the box.

Chapter 411: Cultivating Bamboo

“This is Heaven Lightning Bamboo?” Han Li’s expression continuously fluctuated.

The box contained a two inch long stalk of dried up bamboo the width of a finger and clearly withered roots. No matter how he looked, it appeared completely similar to ordinary bamboo.

With doubts held in his mind, Han Li couldn’t help but expressionlessly take a look at Fairy Violet Spirit.

The young woman saw Han Li’s suspicion and lightly chuckled. She pressed the dried bamboo in between her fingers and took a sparkling, glowing knife in her other hand. Pa! Fairy Violet Spirit quickly chopped down onto the bamboo with all her strength. In the instant the dagger’s blade made contact, the bamboo released a thin arc of electricity and immediately repelled the dagger.

Having seen this, Han Li’s doubts were cleared and he carefully returned the bamboo to the box and carefully put it away.

Soon after, Fairy Violet Spirit gave Han Li an authority medallion belonging to the Exquisite Sound Sect. After the two briefly chatted, Han Li took his leave.

Not long after Han Li left, Lady Fan and Zhuo Ruting returned to the inn. After hearing what Fairy Violet Spirit had agreed on, the two looked at each other for a long while.

“Junior Martial Sister, we’ve already discussed this quite a bit. We should be able to find another Core Formation cultivator, given the grand reputation of the Heaven Lightning Bamboo. Why must we accommodate this person?” Lady Fan couldn’t help but complain.

Although Zhuo Ruting remained silent, her eyebrows furrowed with puzzlement.

“Senior Martial Sister didn’t see how unsightly his face became when I asked him to become our Sect’s elder. His gaze revealed a stalwart resolution that he wouldn’t agree to anything without the Heavenly Lightning Bamboo. Senior Martial Sister had also mentioned that this person isn’t affected by our bewitchment techniques. As for using the Heavenly Lightning Bamboo to invite other cultivators, Senior Martial Sister places far too great a value on that paltry item. Although the Heaven Lightning Bamboo is known as one of the three great divine woods, there are far too few uses of this item. Nobody would use this material for anything aside from refining top grade magic treasures. And with an understanding of magic treasure refinement techniques, they would realize our miniscule amount of Heaven Lightning Bamboo would be completely useless. You should also know that there are many ranks of Heavenly Lightning Bamboo. Ours is only white lightning bamboo at the age of several thousand years of age. Even if it were refined into a magic tool, it wouldn’t be amazingly powerful. It would be better to use this item than to leave it for later. Moreover, since he had agreed to become a sect elder, we merely have to treat him with respect and give him yearly offerings so that when the time comes that our sect encounters a great enemy, he wouldn’t have the nerve to refuse!” Fairy Violet Spirit leisurely said this with an indifferent expression.

The young woman then continued with a faint, bitter smile, “Furthermore, even if there are others that are interested in the Heaven Lightning Bamboo, who would be willing to become our sect elder and dare to admit their status given our current circumstances? That would only bring about its own set of problems! Originally, my mother used her own status as a Core Formation cultivator as method of checks and balances over Elder Zhao and Elder Meng so that they sincerely acted on behalf of the sect. After all, it is extremely easy to suffer betrayal when solely relying on bewitchment techniques and feminine charms to win over high grade cultivators!”

Lady Fan and Zhuo Ruting then became silent.

Having recently experienced a large quantity of betrayals, the two no longer held much confidence in their bewitchment techniques and felt that their Junior Martial Sister’s words held some reason.

“For now, the sect matters will be collaboratively handled by us three. For the time being, we won’t have a sect master until one of our sect members becomes a Core Formation cultivator. There is no rush.” The young woman decisively said.

This time, the two envoys had no disagreements.

“Can we expect Senior Han to meddle in our sect’s affairs by use of his deep cultivation? Should we take any precautions?” Zhuo Ruting asked with a cold voice.

“There won’t be a need. Although I haven’t dealt with him much, his words suggest that he is one who diligently cultivates. He doesn’t care much about affairs outside of cultivation. Otherwise, he would’ve stirred when I offered to give him a female disciple as a concubine. It was most likely because he is like this that he has entered Core Formation!” Fairy Violet Spirit shook her head and revealed slight admiration.

“Sigh. I wonder if we have any chance of Core Formation?” Lady Fan spoke as if she didn’t hold much hope for Core Formation.

When Zhuo Ruting heard this, her face also revealed slight sadness. It seemed these beautiful women also greatly desired to enter Core Formation.

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At this time, Han Li had already returned to his cave residence. He didn’t hastily act and instead chose to first scour through many ancient records.

After much difficulty, he found the cultivation method for Heaven Lightning bamboo from a jade slip and planted the bamboo in his medicine garden in accordance to the exact method described.

As he gazed at the newly planted petite stalk of Heaven Lightning Bamboo, Han Li became extremely excited.

Of course, he understood that Heaven Lightning Bamboo had different grades of quality. However, he didn't take it to heart. This was because the quality and spiritual nature of Heaven Lightning Bamboo depended on its age.

Heaven Lightning Bamboo only released common white lightning when it was aged at five thousand years or less. When it became older than five thousand years old, its lightning would become blue and it would become far stronger.

When it reached ten thousand years old, its lightning would become a dim gold. At that stage, the lightning has the wondrous effect of restraining evil devilish techniques and was known by cultivators as "Devilsbane Lightning".

This rumored stage, "Gold Lightning Bamboo", was the oldest Heaven Lightning Bamboo that had been seen in the cultivation world. It had only been seen once in the Scattered Star Seas. Nobody knew where it came from, and it existed in such a small chunk. As a result, this item had caused much blood to be shed in the Scattered Star Seas over several tens of years. While many great powers were covetously contesting for the item both openly and covertly, it had passed through the hands of countless cultivators.

But in the end, no one had managed to refine it into a magic treasure. This was because the bamboo had made a sudden disappearance as mysterious and unfathomable as its strange appearance. This greatly angered many great powers at the time, and they continuously searched for it for a long before gradually

abandoning the chase.

The magnitude of the previous dispute clearly displayed just how precious ten thousand year old Golden Lightning Bamboo was.

Han Li hadn't yet nurtured a spiritual object up to ten thousand years of age. Normally, medicine pills only required ingredients that were two thousand years old at most. As such, this caused him to greatly anticipate nurturing the Heaven Lightning Bamboo to Gold Lightning Bamboo and made him feel slightly restless as well.

In the following days, Han Li used the green liquid to mature the bamboo and started to take frequent strolls around Heavenly Star City's market. In addition to the spiritual wood that was required as its main ingredient, the Bamboo Cloudswarm Swords required a few rare supplementary materials before being ultimately refined in his Core Flame.

In addition, since these swords were a set of magic treasures, it required a far greater amount of similar materials. Although Han Li had already gathered a few of them, he didn't have enough to form a whole and had to continue his search.

The Scattered Star Seas were far more plentiful in materials than the Heavenly South Region. After bankrupting himself as a result of two years of liberal, unrestrained spending, he had managed to barely scrape together the items he required. For this reason, he couldn't help but put himself at risk of attracting attention by selling off his remaining rare demon cores.

As of now, Han Li could only look at his near empty storage pouch and let out a long sigh as he faced the sky.

Refining magic treasures, especially a particularly good magic treasure, wasn't something an ordinary rogue cultivator could afford.

.....

One day, Han Li walked into his medicine garden with unconcealable anticipation.

A few days before, he had dripped what should've been the green drop to age his Heaven Lightning Bamboo to its ten thousandth year. Han Li couldn't help but become excited upon thinking of the great power of the rumored Gold Lightning Bamboo.

When the bamboo was first planted, it had only been two inches long. But now, it had undergone a massive change. It was now about a foot long with a body of glistening emerald green and was covered in a layer of faint rainbow light.

After a moment of attentive examination, he summoned a short sword magic tool into his hand and shot it towards the bamboo as a streak of white light.

An arc of faint golden lightning was released. With a pop, the short sword was struck away by the arc of golden lightning, turning it into a spiral of azure smoke before disappearing without

a trace.

When Han Li saw this, he immediately smiled and greatly rejoiced!

He now wanted to find out what sort of amusing face Fairy Violet Spirit would make should she discover that the White Lightning Bamboo had turned into Gold Lightning Bamboo. It was only a pity that he would never have the opportunity to see it.

This was probably the most profitable exchange he had ever had since arriving in the cultivation world!

Chapter 412: Small Green Bamboo Pavilion

As Han Li was basking in joy, he became somewhat curious. If he were to continue to mature the Gold Lightning Bamboo, what transformation would occur?

With that in mind, Han Li continued to drop the green liquid on the bamboo for several more months but neither its power nor its appearance had changed. Even its height had stayed entirely the same without growing even a single iota. However, during this time, a young bamboo sprout began to grow at its side.

Soon after dripping more of the green liquid on it, the young sprout grew more and more. After several months, a new complete stalk of Heaven Lightning Bamboo had grown, appearing to be exactly the same as the original.

Han Li was overly joyous as the development.

To tell the truth, the original stalk of Heaven Lightning Bamboo was barely enough to refine even a set of twelve Bamboo Cloudswarm Swords. But now that he knew that the green liquid could produce young bamboo shoots, his dire shortage of raw materials was now completely settled.

However, this only caused Han Li's ambitions to grow even larger.

Without having to worry anymore about a lack of the core material, Han Li would no longer be limited to a set of twelve

flying swords. He was now inspired to refine the greatest number of Bamboo Cloudswarm Swords, a full set of seventy two.

Although an early Core Formation cultivator lacked the magic power needed to refine and control such a large amount of flying swords all at once, Han Li wasn't in a rush. He could just slowly refine them one set at a time in accordance with his cultivation.

In any case, so long as the flying swords belonged to the same set, he could store them into his body as a single magic treasure. He would also have no problem using each of the swords separately.

With that thought in mind, Han Li's heart blazed with fervent desire and he started to consider whether or not he was capable of this.

The greatest problem when refining a set of magic treasures was the differences in each treasure's core material and the difficulty of success during refinement. But with limitless amounts of Heaven Lightning Bamboo, these issues posed no problem.

What followed next with regards to his refinement were the preparations of the supplementary materials.

He had long prepared the supplementary materials. Fortunately, refining a set of seventy-two swords would consume the same amount of supplementary materials as refining a set of twelve, so he didn't have to go look for more. Now he only had to worry about his significant lack of ability for refining magic treasures.

He didn't even have any experience in the field of tool refinement. This wouldn't raise any problems if he were refining a common magic treasure; he would still be able to easily succeed. However, the process of refining even a single one of the Bamboo Cloudswarm Swords was much more complex than refining a common magic treasure.

In addition, each individual flying sword was an incomplete product that was required to undergo treatment with a specific spell formation because they formed a set. As such, a familiarity with spell formations was also required, or else it would be impossible to refine this magic treasure to completion.

As Han Li was a man of extremely firm will, even when facing such a difficult decision, he would only accept the best or nothing at all. This was also demonstrated by Han Li's strong determination with acquiring the Heaven Lightning Bamboo.

For the entirety of the following day, Han Li spent his time pondering over his cultivation plans for the next twenty years.

Several days later in Heavenly Star City's market, an unremarkable, small store suddenly had a new owner. He appeared to be a common youth of about thirty years old and had a lofty, broad-faced man with him.

This youth changed the store name from "Li's Assorted Goods" to the "Small Green Bamboo Pavilion". The store only sold talismans and medicine ingredients at first, but half a month later it started selling crude, low grade magic tools.

But what left the nearby store owners at a loss for words was that the youth didn't often walk out of his store. He'd spend his entire day looking through a coverless, thin ancient book while occasionally dancing with joy as if he were completely enjoying himself. However, he would sometimes enter the store's back residence and stay there for long periods of time.

As for the customers and running the business, they were all handled by the large, straightforward man.

The nearby store owners were all mortal natives to Heavenly Star City and found it difficult to make a living there. There was one store owner, a graying old man surnamed He, that had been born with inferior spiritual roots and had reached the fourth layer of Qi Condensation. But even with such low cultivation, old man He had received a great amount of respect from the mortals and was always addressed as Immortal Master He.

They knew that this youth was a mortal due to his lack of magic power, because a few people had asked Master He previously.

They gained some courage from this news and would drop by the store, chatting with the youth surnamed Han about his daily life and such.

After all, this location was rather desolate, and business was slow. They could only drop by each other's stores and chat to chase away the boredom.

With the arrival of this unfamiliar face, there was naturally much more for everyone to talk about.

However, the youth mostly listened and seemed to be somewhat slow of speech and unskilled at chatting with others.

Furthermore, the youth never revealed his origin. Whenever he was asked this, he would only answer with a silent smile, causing others to quickly drop the matter.

After several such trips, the others gradually lost interest and no longer visited the Small Green Bamboo Pavilion.

This had actually caused the youth to let out a breath of relief.

Of course, the youth and the large man were, respectively, Han Li and Crooked Soul in a disguise. Although Han Li used the most widely known jianghu disguise techniques, it was still more than enough for mortals and low grade cultivators.

Han Li had not opened this shop to acquire a meager sum of spirit stones, but to temper his heart by immersing himself into the mortal world. He had also specifically chose this location in preparation for his study of the Dao of tool refinement and formation spells.

Han Li hadn't been particularly experienced in these two disciplines and had been too busy during his time as a Foundation Establishment cultivator to consider studying them. But now that

he had reached Core Formation, his next goal was to acquire experience and knowledge in these two fields in order to be able to refine his magic treasure. As it would take quite some time to cultivate the Heaven Lightning Bamboo, he wanted to use this downtime to study “Yunxiao’s Experiences” and the ancient formation spell records that Xin Ruyin had given him.

To tell the truth, Han Li had always been very interested in tool refinement and formation spells.

He planned to simultaneously study both fields for twenty years. He didn’t hold any extravagant hope of becoming a genius in either field, but so long as he could acquire a modicum of skill, he would be satisfied. At the very least, he should be able to refine the simplest formation flags and plates.

However, delving into this field wasn’t a matter of only studying. It required hands on practice. This resulted in Han Li accumulating a large pile of inferior magic tools with no method of disposal.

It would be a waste to just throw them away, but there was no use in keeping them as they were nearly useless. In addition, in order to refine when he was suddenly inspired, he had to frequently acquire all sorts of odd materials. However, it was a hassle to make trips to the city market every day.

As it so happened, the fourth layer of the Great Development Technique required the temperament of a mortal heart. Otherwise, he would suffer backlash from his inner demons while cultivating the fourth layer of the Great Development technique.

After some consideration, Han Li decided to purchase this store and tackle all the problems in one go!

The location wasn't too noisy and he wouldn't be disturbed during his studies of tool refinement and formation spells. As it was also in close proximity to mortals, he could personally see how they lived. In addition, he could purchase the materials he needed to refine magic tools and formation spells in a timely manner. Likewise, he could sell off the small items he created, even if it was just a small amount of them!

After seeing a few low level cultivators purchase some of his personally refined magic tools, Han Li's mood was greatly lifted.

Of course, he would still take trips back to his cave residence every few days to mature his Heaven Lightning Bamboo and to take care of his Gold Devouring Beetles and two Bloodjade Spiders.

But not long after, Han Li witnessed an astonishing scene in his medicine garden. When the child stalk of bamboo growing out his original stalk reached the age of six thousand years, it fell off of the main branch for no reason. Its few leaves also cleanly fell off and upon touching the floor, they immediately turned into leaves of pure, gaudy gold.

Although he didn't know what purpose the leaves served, Han Li was unwilling to throw them away and just gathered them into his storage pouch. As for the emerald-green stalk, he carefully placed it back into the jade paste box and put it away.

After collecting six pieces, he would have enough to refine the Bamboo Cloudswarm Swords.

As such, Han Li restrained his magic power and began his worldly life after he inserted himself among the mortals of the secular world in an obscure corner of the market city.

Apart from becoming engrossed in reading thin paper book copies of jade slips, he silently observed the surrounding mortal's complex expressions and various emotions, and began to gradually appreciate them and recall a few memories.

Chapter 413: Refinement

The lives lead by mortals differed greatly from those lead by cultivators. Mortals lives were brimming with joys and sorrows, where the old withered and life was born anew.

In a few short years of observation, Han Li began to recall feelings that he had long forgotten, both positive and negative. Regardless of the emotion, they still caused Han Li's mind to stir, allowing him a chance for introspection and to now understand these emotions from a cultivator's perspective.

Likewise, his comprehension of formation spells and his skill in tool refinement gradually improved over a long period of time. Most notably, Han Li's store, the Small Green Bamboo Pavilion, had developed somewhat of a reputation in the area over the span of just two years.

This was because cultivators were able to purchase a few inexpensive yet functional magic tools at Han Li's store. A few of the luckier customers were even capable of purchasing a few rare intermediate grade talismans at the store.

After this news spread locally, a few low level cultivators immediately scrambled towards Han Li's shop.

These magic tools and talismans had obviously been personally crafted by Han Li. Ever since he entered Core Formation, he was finally able to grasp the mid-grade magic techniques that he long desired. Although they were the lowest among mid-grade

techniques, Han Li was still very satisfied with them.

However, intermediate talisman weren't something that could be refined using common talisman paper. They could only be crafted using by using the hide of rare demon beasts, but not just any hide would suffice. Each intermediate talisman had their own unique requirements regarding demon beast hides.

Fortunately, Han Li had thought of this before he sold off his demon beast materials and had kept a large quantity of talisman materials. Otherwise, he would have had no way of refining the talismans despite grasped their magic techniques.

Han Li first practiced using the lesser quality demon beast skins. After feeling that he was capable enough, he then moved on to refining a few particular talismans using rarer materials.

The talismans that he practiced creating were all attack type magic techniques. Every month or so, Han Li would put one or two of them up for sale in his shop and sell them to the first buyer.

To a Core Formation cultivator like Han Li, these talismans were of little value as their power paled in the face of magic treasures. As such, he had no purpose to preserve them.

However, Han Li had clearly underestimated the allure his intermediate talismans had to Qi Condensation and Foundation Establishment cultivators. Even after raising the price of these talismans several times, these cultivators continued to readily spend their spirit stones without hesitation, allowing Han Li to

accumulate a small fortune.

But it was a pity that intermediate talismans were extremely difficult to create. Even with the many demon beast skins that Han Li had on hand, his rate of success was pathetically low, failing thirty times for every successful talisman he managed to create.

When compared to his rate of success with low grade talismans, Han Li could only bitterly smile.

Otherwise, he would've accumulated a much larger fortune by selling intermediate talismans.

In addition, Han Li's skill at refining tools also increased, causing quite a few mid and high-grade magic tools to appear in his shop. As a result, the Small Green Bamboo Pavilion's reputation became increasingly well-known. Fortunately, his resounding reputation had been restricted to a small circle of low level cultivators, so Han Li didn't have to worry about provoking any trouble.

But at the start of the ninth year, Han Li started to refine formation flags and discs by applying his understanding of a few simple formation spells.

Because of the complementary insights provided by Qi Yunxiao and Xin Ruting, Han Li was able to avoid making many mistakes and managed to grasp a few minor but crucial skills. But he still ended up fumbling around through trial and error as he tried to refine a set of formation setup tools for the first time. The refinement was extremely difficult, and it consumed a large

portion of his time before he managed to produce results.

However, Han Li wasn't impatient. Now that he had reached core formation, he had plenty of time to slowly accumulate experience and understanding.

But most importantly, he had obtained some understanding in the refinement method of the "Bamboo Cloudswarm Swords" as he practiced refining items, hopefully ensuring his success in his first attempt. After all, he wouldn't have enough materials leftover for a second attempt.

With Han Li focused on refining magic tools and studying formation spells, time quickly passed, day by day.

With departing springs and incoming autumns, Han Li's somewhat renowned Small Green Bamboo Pavilion had unknowingly existed for over twenty years. Han Li now had the appearance of an old man above the age of fifty.

This obviously wasn't Han Li's true appearance, but a measure he had taken in order to conceal his eternally youthful appearance. Due to the passage of time in the mortal world, Han Li had no choice but to turn his appearance into that of an old man.

As of now, Han Li was standing in the residence at the back of his store and looking around with a peculiar emotion.

On the day before, he had passed on the store to someone else

and concluded his immersion in the mortal world. This was due to having finally matured the long anticipated sixth stalk of Gold Lightning Bamboo to full maturation.

Having lived here for over twenty years, Han Li's heart was without disturbance, but he felt a slight feeling of nostalgia upon leaving. His experience in the market city had been a rare period of peace in his life.

At that moment, he heard noisy shouts from his neighbor, and Han Li couldn't help but smile upon hearing it. He didn't need to use his spiritual sense to know that the store owner was spouting out recommendations to his customers, trying to sell off his store defining treasures that hadn't sold for the past eight years.

When Han Li had originally arrived, the shop was managed by an old man. He had retired four years ago and now his son watched over the business. Although his son had a fiery temperament, he treated others sincerely. But when he was doing business, he would often loudly brag about his store's goods, stunning many foreign cultivators.

Han Li sighed and shook his head before leaving the Small Green Bamboo Pavilion with Crooked Soul. Not long after, the two had completely disappeared from the city market.

Upon entering his cave dwelling, Han Li immediately brought many tool refinement materials into his hidden room and set down a small magic formation that he had comprehended during the last few years. The formation spell served no other purpose than to conceal Spiritual Qi fluctuations. As such, it was quite suitable for

Han Li to use as he refined his magic treasure. He didn't want others to peak at him halfway through the refinement.

Han Li quietly meditated in his hidden room for three entire days so that both his spirit and magic power were in peak state before starting the refinement.

First, he took out the jade paste box from his storage pouch and gently placed it in front of him. He then opened the box, revealing the six emerald-green stalks of Heaven Lightning Bamboo.

Han Li solemnly gazed at the bamboo and took a deep breath before lightly touching a stalk of the green bamboo. The foot-long Heaven Lightning Bamboo suddenly flew out of the box and quickly stopped, motionlessly floating in front of his chest.

With a serious expression, Han Li formed an incantation gesture with his hands, causing glistening light to flow around his face, gradually forming a layer of azure light.

As the azure light grew increasingly dense, Han Li opened his mouth and spouted out a thin thread of azure core flame towards the Heaven Lightning Bamboo before him.

Crackle. An arc of faint golden lightning arced from the bamboo, forcefully stopping the core flame from approaching any closer.

Han Li's eyes lit with consideration. The azure core flame immediately grew several times thicker and enveloped the bamboo

and its lightning, starting the long process of refinement.

Using one's core flame consumed a considerably large amount of spiritual power, but fortunately, Han Li came prepared. As he was releasing his core flame, he held onto a deep azure spirit stone and absorbed its Spiritual Qi. When the spirit stone started to be insufficient, he casually took out a medicine pill and swallowed it.

Although the medicine pill didn't immediately transform into magic power, it contained a great amount of spiritual power, giving Han Li the peace of mind of knowing that he was prepared for the coming war of attrition.

After three days passed by, the Heaven Lightning Bamboo's lightning had disappeared due to the lack of spiritual power from its main body. Without anything left to obstruct the azure core flame, Han Li started the process of smelting the Heaven Lightning Bamboo.

After several more days, the bamboo began to show signs of dissolution. Portions of its trunk began to emit a faint light, releasing densely packed, numerous, small drops of variously colored liquids.

Over ten days later, the Heaven Lightning Bamboo was finally dissolved of all its impurities, leaving a fist-sized ball of concentrated, dark green liquid. It appeared to be incredibly dense.

Having seen this small amount of liquid, Han Li could only let out a deep sigh. He had to put in quite a bit of effort just to refine

the Heaven Lightning Bamboo.

Han Li then withdrew his core flame and put away the spirit stone in his hand. Afterwards, he extended his ten fingers and shot out ten thin threads of Spiritual Qi from his fingers, penetrating into the green liquid.

Soon after, Han Li started to shift his fingers, causing the spirit threads to rotate and deform the ball of liquid.

Under the manipulation of the spirit threads, a small ball of green liquid separated from the main body that floated nearby.

A second ball separated, then a third ball, and...

After Han Li finished the last division of liquid, there were twelve equally sized green balls of liquid arranged into a circle.

Chapter 414: Shaping

Han Li slightly narrowed his eyes and shook his fingers, cutting off the ten spirit threads.

He then patted his storage pouch and twelve streaks of white light flew out, stopping underneath the floating balls of green liquid.

The white lights faded away to reveal twelve small boxes, flawlessly crafted from white jade but only a few inches in size.

With a light wave of his sleeve, the jade boxes all opened. Han Li then uttered, “Drop,” causing the green balls of liquid to drop down into their respective boxes.

After resealing all of the boxes, Han Li was finally able to relax. Even with the aid of spirit stones and medicine pills, his magic power had been completely exhausted by the refinement.

As such, Han Li quietly meditated for several days to return to his peak state before continuing the refinement of the other stalks of Heavenly Lightning Bamboo.

Three months passed in the blink of an eye, and Han Li had finally managed to refine all of his Heavenly Lightning Bamboo into an extremely pure liquid.

After a moment of rest, Han Li started to place down an

extremely complicated spell formation in his hidden room.

Han Li didn't know the name of this magic formation; he only knew that it was required to refine the Bamboo Cloudswarm Sword. The golden page's refinement method had mentioned over and over that it absolutely had to be prepared.

As a result, Han Li took extreme care when setting up the formation despite his familiarity with it even while having practiced setting it up several times in the past. After all, a single error in the symbols could cause any number of mishaps to occur during the refinement.

As such, it took Han Li half a month of great care to finish laying down the formation. Only after testing it by placing several mid-grade spirit stones around it and feeling that the formation worked as expected, could Han Li finally relax.

Han Li didn't set out to immediately start refining his magic treasure. Instead, he decided to leave his hidden room for the time being.

After continuously making use of his core flame for half a year and maintaining full concentration up until now, Han Li found it difficult to continue, even as a Core Formation cultivator. He needed a change of pace, as the next step was the most crucial in the magic treasure refinement process.

After Han Li left the room, he encountered a rather pleasant surprise.

Under the irregular feeding with the Rainbow Skirt Grass, the Gold Devouring Beetles had finally started to devour each other once more. Ever since the Gold Devouring Beetles numbered in the several tens of thousands, it was difficult to get them to lay more eggs and evolve using his small amounts of Rainbow Skirt Grass. In addition, most of his green liquid in the past years had been spent on maturing the Heaven Lightning Grass. It shouldn't have been possible for the Gold Devouring Beetles go undergo any change.

However, after the Heaven Lightning Bamboo maturation finished, Han Li had Crooked Soul focus on breeding the beetles. After all, Han Li still held large hopes towards these exotic insects.

After Crooked Soul brought Han Li up to date, he immediately headed to the insect room.

The surviving Gold Devouring Beetles had gold specks that enveloped less than half of their shells. He supposed that the next generation would have a slightly larger concentration of gold specks.

But as Han Li gazed a while longer, his happy expression disappeared and was replaced with a frown. At this rate, it would be unlikely for the Gold Devouring Beetles to ever evolve to become fully golden.

After every evolution, their number increases by several times, as does the amount of Rainbow Skirt Grass that was required for their next evolution. As his green liquid could only mature so much

Rainbow Skirt Grass, it was impossible for the massive number of Gold Devouring Beetles to all evolve at once. It would take a very long, unknown amount time before the next evolution would be possible.

Han Li sank into deep thought as he stood outside the insect room.

It seemed he would have to focus on breeding only a portion of them; otherwise, he may never have the chance to see to see any fully golden “Gold Devouring Beetles”.

With that in mind, Han Li suddenly came to a decision.

However, this must be done after the Gold Devouring Beetles laid their eggs. Han Li could only set it aside for now and first focus on refining his magic treasure.

As such, Han Li rested for an entire month before finally deciding on the day he would act. He first lit incense in his bedroom and prayed for two days, causing his heart to enter a state of tranquility. He then returned to the hidden room and stood at the very center of the formation spell.

With a solemn expression, he raised his arms while dropping several tens of boxes of the refined Heaven Lightning Bamboo onto the magic formation, seemingly in a specific arrangement

Afterwards, all sorts of boxes flew out of his storage pouch in

quick succession and dropped down in front of Han Li with their lids open, revealing the supplementary materials that he had acquired.

After taking a look at these materials, he took a deep breath and sat down cross-legged with his eyes closed, slowly entering a state of meditation.

After the time it took to finish a meal, Han Li opened his eyes with his body covered in a mist of azure light.

Just as the mist appeared, the spirit stones embedded in the spell formation began to shine dazzlingly and released a low hum.

Although Han Li's body remained motionless, his fingers were quickly shifting, drawing out the refined balls of liquid Heaven Lightning Bamboo from their boxes.

Then with a series of whooshes, bowl-thick pillars of light shot out from the formation, enveloping the balls of liquid and completely restricting their movements.

Han Li closed his eyes once more after seeing this and calmly released his powerful spiritual sense, bringing the light pillars under his control. The light pillars suddenly appeared alive and started to flicker while incessantly changing their color.

This strange scene continued until the light pillars eventually matched after an unknown number of fluctuations.

After the final color change had occurred, all the light pillars were a fiery-red color, providing an even stronger contrast with the alluring emerald-green liquid contained within them.

Still expressionless, Han Li opened his mouth and spat out a thread of dark green core flame towards one of the light pillars.

Woosh. The light pillar wildly combusted, becoming a scarlet pillar of flame in an instant.

Han Li continued to release core flame without the slightest hesitation, igniting all of the light pillars. As a result, there were eventually seventy-two six meter tall pillars of flame, filling the hidden room with a blinding red light.

He let out a gentle sigh.

With regards to the power of flames, a core flame was far more powerful than these flashy pillars of fire. Unfortunately, more powerful flames weren't the slightest bit better at flying sword refinement. As such, it seemed that he had no choice but to temporarily injure his Origin Qi and squander much of his core strength.

Ceasing these gloomy thoughts, Han Li used his spiritual sense and the power of the formation to influence the green liquid within the flame pillars to slowly undergo a change. Their round shapes became longer and thinner bit by bit. Afterwards, they formed the initial core of a sword, each five inches in length.

While this was quite easy to describe, it actually took Han Li an entire day of focused control to shape the seventy-two balls of sparkling green liquid inside the fire pillars into the form of swords.

Han Li let out a gloomy breath and took a brief moment of rest. He felt his head slightly ache, and couldn't help but bitterly smile in response.

Even with a spiritual sense as powerful as Han Li's, simultaneously controlling the shaping of seventy-two flying swords was only barely possible.

Although he was nearly finished with the shaping stage that centered around his spiritual sense, Han Li didn't dare to relax.

He formed an incantation gesture with his hands, causing the flame pillars to flicker several times before suddenly disappearing. Only the small, emerald-green swords remained, floating in the air.

As Han Li's hands blurred with motion, the many small swords, slowly flew toward him and formed a circle around him.

Seeing that the seventy-two swords had gathered nearby, he suddenly bit down on the tip of his tongue and spat out a mouthful of blood essence, condensing it into a ball of blood that was the size of an egg.

Under Han Li's control, he dripped a few drops of blood onto each of the swords.

As soon as the drops of blood essence touched the flying swords, they quickly seeped into them and disappeared without a trace.

After finishing this, Han Li tapped a box of silver powder on the floor, immediately scattering it. The powder evenly distributed itself among the swords, causing them to become a sparkling silver.

Following that, Han Li continued with a box of fine black dust, and then a...

Han Li carefully followed the instructions of the refinement, continuing to add supplementary materials onto the seventy-two sword cores. Afterwards, he enveloped the swords into pillars of flame once again and refined them once more.

This time, Han Li didn't need to simultaneously refine all of the flying swords at once and took great care to carefully hone them in small sets.

Then, in strict accordance to what was described in the golden page, Han Li engraved a miniature spell formation that he didn't completely understand on each of the swords with his spiritual sense.

Chapter 415: Inside A Pearl

Han Li eventually left the hidden room two months later.

Although his appearance was haggard, he was filled with excitement. Once he thought of the seventy-two Bamboo Cloudswarm Swords he had absorbed into his body, Han Li couldn't help but smile, unable to contain his joy.

In order to refine this set of magic treasures, he had spent twenty years to meticulously refine them without any flaws. Although he hadn't tested the power of the treasures, he was sure that after nurturing them awhile, even a single one of the swords would have power that far surpassed common magic treasures like the Green Brilliance Sword.

As he was feeling pleased with himself, Crooked Soul informed him through his spiritual sense that the Gold Devouring Beetles had laid eggs, which improved Han Li's already joyful mood.

Han Li returned to his bedroom to rest and recuperate for a day before heading over to the insect room. A large portion of the room was covered in the sparkling white eggs of the Gold Devouring Beetles.

Without the slightest hesitation, he created another insect room beside the first with the exact same layout. He then laid down a huge spirit controlling magic formation in the new insect room and dripped a large amount of blood essence onto the formation.

Afterwards, he moved a majority of the insect eggs into the spell formation in the new insect room and proceeded with the spirit controlling ceremony.

As for the original insect room, he left the thousand beetle eggs with the most vigorous auras inside.

Having finished, Han Li finally relaxed. While he was restoring his cultivation, he decided to pay a visit to a few nearby Core Formation cultivators he had previously befriended.

While Han Li was immersing himself in the mortal world, a series of grand events had occurred throughout the Scattered Star Seas, causing much unease and turmoil. The most influential event amongst them was how the Six United Palaces and the eight other various powers experienced a sudden rebellion by subordinates and disciples, removing their original leadership from power and replacing them with previously unknown individuals.

There had been another event where a few unremarkable, small sects were exterminated and their treasures seized.

During this time, the powers of the Scattered Star Seas simultaneously pulled back their men and glared at one another with mutual suspicion.

The most terrible among the events was when at an unknown time, the Heavenly Star Sages had experienced cultivation backlash. It was rumored that they had been completely crippled.

When this rumor began to spread, an uproar suddenly arose. Nearly everyone concerned with the matter seemed to be waiting for the Heavenly Star Palace to address these rumors.

But much to everyone's astonishment the Heavenly Star Palace didn't address it, neither giving a confirmation nor denial, causing even greater alarm across the Scattered Star Seas.

At the same time, a few ambitious and hidden powers began to stir.

There were a few that plotted conspiracies and others that started to form wicked, nefarious alliances. However, not long after the rumors had spread, the chaos suddenly disappeared without a trace as if everything had returned to normal.

But the more observant cultivators knew that this was only the calm before the storm.

When Han Li paid his Core Formation neighbors a visit, they had all revealed a trace of worry during their chats.

However, Han Li didn't care about any of this in the slightest. Regardless of whether the Star Palace continues their reign over the Scattered Star Seas or another power emerges to overthrow them, it would have little to do with him. He was someone who treaded the solitary path of a lone cultivator. So long as he was careful and didn't involve himself in the turmoil, he would make it out just fine.

In accordance to Han Li's own plans, he would spend the next few years nurturing his flying swords and refining a few relatively impressive formation setup tools before heading out to sea and hunting a few grade six demon beasts.

After all, only medicine pills created with a grade six demon core would prove effective at progressing a Core Formation cultivator's cultivation.

Thus, Han Li spent his days delving into the Dao of tool refinement and formation spells while meditating at night, using his core flame to slowly temper the seventy-two Bamboo Cloudswarm Swords stored within his body.

But not long after he started this routine, his Gold Devouring Beetles finally hatched.

Han Li summoned the beetles and happily stored them into several high-grade spirit beast pouches. As the beetles had recognized him as their master, they obeyed his summon. During Han Li's free time, he slowly trained them so that they would be useful when confronting enemies later.

Han Li was fully content with his life of peaceful and steady cultivation.

Ever since he had achieved Core Formation, he started to set his eyes on the Nascent Soul Stage, pondering whether or not his cultivation would one day reach such heights.

But one day as Han Li was tempering his flying swords in his home, his expression suddenly changed, and he slowly walked out of his residence.

A forty-year-old man that had a gentle, refined appearance with fair skin, slender eyes, and long eyebrows had appeared outside of his cave residence.

“Sorry to bother you, Fellow Daoist Han!” When the middle-aged man saw Han Li appear, he made a gentle greeting.

“Brother Jin! How did you find the time to visit my humble abode? Please come in!” Han Li didn’t dare to delay and immediately saluted him before inviting the middle-aged man inside.

This person was Jin Qing, one of the Core Formation cultivators that lived nearby. He was an upright person and had given Han Li a few pointers right after he had entered Core Formation. He could be considered Han Li’s closest friend at the moment.

When Han Li had last paid a visit to his home, he discovered that Jin Qing wasn’t present and later found out that Fellow Daoist Jin had yet to return from his last few years of travel. Han Li naturally felt happy at his sudden appearance.

“There is no need. I just want to say a few things before I have to go and take care of other matters.” Jin Qing shook his head and faintly smiled.

“Please, don’t hesitate to speak, Brother Jin. I’m all ears.” Han Li quipped.

Jin Qing revealed a slight smile and slowly said, “Not long after I returned, I heard from the nearby Fellow Daoists that Fellow Daoist Han had spent these past few years diligently studying the Dao of Formation Spells and acquired some success in the field. I offer you my sincere congratulations! As it so happens, I’ve come across a difficult matter during my travels, a formation spell restriction that must be removed. Thus, I have come here to request Fellow Daoist Han’s aid. I hope you will not decline.”

Han Li blankly stared for a moment before asking with a calm expression, “Restriction? Do you know what kind?”

“Please, take a look at this!” Jin Qing didn’t give him an answer, instead he took something out of his storage pouch and handed it to Han Li.

Han Li saw that it was a white pearl the size of a thumb.

“What’s this?” Han Li looked at Jin Qing with surprise.

“Fellow Daoist will know what it is once he pours a bit of spiritual power into it.” Jin Qing chuckled and revealed a mysterious expression.

Han Li frowned and begrudgingly poured a bit of his spiritual power into it. In the next instant, the pearl glowed with a blinding

white light.

If mortals saw this light, they would forcefully turn their gaze in fear of going blind. But to a Core Formation cultivator like Han Li, he viewed it as a common white light.

As a result of his examination, Han Li's expression slightly changed. At that moment, something had appeared inside the pearl.

Without waiting for any warnings from Jin Qing, he took the initiative to sink his spiritual sense deeper into the pearl. After some time passed, he wore a solemn expression.

Han Li withdrew his spiritual sense and took a deep breath before looking at the middle-aged cultivator and asking, "Ancient cultivator ruins?"

"I'm not too sure. However, in my experience only an ancient cultivator would be capable of using such an archaic method for preserving a map." Jin Qing revealed a trace of excitement and spoke in a bit of a hurry.

Han Li nodded his head. Storing important information in pearls and shells was a common practice by the ancient cultivators of the Scattered Star Seas. As for the pearl, it contained something that resembled a map.

After a moment, Jin Qing continued, "There are two of these

pearls. Together, they form a complete map. I, along with another Fellow Daoist, discovered these at a small store. At the time, they were being sold in a necklace alongside other ordinary pearls. It was then that we each separately took a pearl and agreed to search for the location together.

“With what you said, you must’ve already found the location described in the map, yes?” Han Li asked pensively while stroking his chin.

“That’s right. We spent five years searching for it and have just recently found it. But unfortunately, it is blocked by a huge barrier. As we don’t have the slightest understanding of formation spells, we could only turn back in disappointment.”

“However, we decided that upon returning we would each invite a formation spell expert to help break the barrier. Fellow Daoist Han also knows that very few amongst us rogue cultivators study the Dao of Formation Spells. As such, I can only come to you and shamelessly ask for assistance. Fellow Daoist Han, please feel at ease. So long as you can break the formation, we will give you a portion of the rewards, regardless of whatever the ancient cultivator ruins hold.” Jin Qing saw that Han Li was slightly hesitant and hastily gave an explanation along with a promise.

Chapter 416: Sand Mountain

Han Li unconsciously frowned in thought before saying, “Brother Jin, could you give me some time to think about this? I can give you an answer in two days.”

“Of course! Please, think it over. If you don’t accept, I will go and see if there are any other rogue cultivator formation spell experts willing to give it a try.” Jin Qing replied with a tone of much consideration.

After a moment more of idle chatter, he saluted Han Li and took his leave.

Han Li stood in his original spot as he watched Jin Qing flying farther away, muttering to himself irresolutely.

Ancient cultivator ruins weren’t exactly a rare find in the Scatter Star Seas, and what they contained greatly varied: from absolutely nothing at all, cultivation insights from ancient cultivators, or even precious items such as previously extinct materials or magic treasures.

In short, a majority of ruins would have something to salvage, but what one discovered would depend on luck.

However, Han Li truly didn’t wish to journey in search of an ancient cultivator’s ruins. The Scattered Star Seas were currently beset by waves of concealed turmoil, and anywhere outside of Heavenly Star City was neither safe nor secure. In addition, Han Li

hadn't been tempering his Bamboo Cloudswarm Swords for long so he couldn't greatly rely on their strength.

As such, he was truly hesitant to embark on a journey at this time.

Had someone else asked him, Han Li would've already refused but, unfortunately for him, he had a good relationship with Jin Qing. Since he had given Han Li a few cultivation pointers the first moment he met him, Han Li found it embarrassing to refuse him.

After standing still a while longer in contemplation, Han Li eventually raised his head and lightly sighed, "I still have two days. I should think about this some more."

With that, Han Li let the matter go. With a swift turn, he returned to his cave residence.

Two days later, Jin Qing arrived outside his cave residence once more. Han Li had eventually decided to agree due to their friendship, and for the slight excitement he felt towards the ancient cultivator ruins. Who knows what magnificent items could be found within?

Jin Qing was naturally overjoyed and left Heavenly Star City alongside Han Li and Crooked Soul, heading towards the ancient cultivator ruins.

Over the years the nearby cultivators had tacitly understood that

Crooked Soul was Han Li's avatar, Jin Qing wasn't surprised to see him tagging along.

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Two months later, Han Li and the others were flying through a remote area of the Scattered Star Seas.

According to Jin Qing, they shouldn't be far away from their destination, given the long amount of time they'd been flying. As expected, they caught sight of a large island less than half a day later.

The island was expansive with a radius spanning over five hundred kilometers. However, a majority of the island was covered in hills and mountains. From a glance, everything seemed to be covered in yellow dust.

Han Li gazed down at the island and asked Jin Qing with surprise, "It's this island?"

"That's right. We found this island by following the map. I heard from the nearby mortals that this island is completely uninhabited. Not only are there no spirit veins nearby, but for some unknown reason, there are no trees living on this island either." Jin Qing explained with a slight trace of puzzlement.

Han Li was slightly surprised and pondered for a moment before speaking with a smile, "That's a good sign! The more unordinary

the island, the more likely it is to actually be an ancient cultivator ruin.”

“Hehe! Originally, we also thought the same. We ended up searching the entire island until we found the most likely location.” Jin Qing spoke with satisfaction.

Han Li faintly smiled. After taking a look around, he casually asked, “You said that there was a formation spell shrouding an area? Where is it?”

“There is a huge sandy mountain fifty kilometers to the east. One of its sides is sealed off by a large formation.” Jin Qing spoke without hesitation.

Han Li grinned and said, “Let’s go then! Maybe your partner already arrived and dissolved the formation spell.”

“Hehe! To tell the truth, that wouldn’t be bad. It would be much less troublesome. At most, they’d just take a larger portion of the treasures within.” Jin Qing stroked his chin and wore a sly expression. When Han Li saw his expression, he involuntarily laughed.

The two were only joking. Everybody knew that ancient cultivator formations weren’t something that could easily be broken through without at least a month or two of trial and error.

“Let’s go, Fellow Daoist Han! We’d better not keep them

waiting.” Jin Qing called out to Han Li before flying off in a streak of azure-white light.

Han LI faintly smiled and chased after him with Crooked Soul on their magic treasures.

To a Core Formation cultivator, fifty kilometers was something they could easily traverse in a mere moment.

A huge yellow mountain entered Han Li’s sight. It was about a three kilometers tall and was entirely covered in yellow sand. As there wasn’t a single trace of green, it gave its viewers an awry feeling as if it were made entirely out of sandy yellow dirt.

As they flew closer to the mountain, a gale suddenly blew, throwing sand and pebbles into the sky.

The unending gale immediately caused the nearby area to turn pitch-black, due to the dense layer of sand kicked up by the wind blocking the light.

Han Li and company held no fear towards a sandstorm. With a flash of brilliance, their bodies were covered in a layer of light, allowing them to steadily fly forward.

After flying through the sandstorm for five kilometers, it suddenly disappeared, and they were able to easily arrive at the base of the sandy mountain.

Jin Qing then flew a small circle around the mountain with Han Li, eventually arriving at several, extremely crude stone buildings. It seemed that they were built by using a stone transformation technique as the buildings all shared the same monotonous grey.

Before anyone had descended, the door to one of the buildings opened with two men and one woman walking out. The men were both Core Formation cultivators while the woman was a Foundation Establishment cultivator.

“Fellow Daoist Jin, you’ve arrived! How timely! We had only arrived recently.” The cultivator at the center was a refined youth that wore white clothes. Upon seeing Jin Qing, he cordially called out to him in a rather friendly manner.

“Fellow Daoist Hu came earlier, as I expected. After all, he didn’t have to go back to Heavenly Star City and fetch Fellow Daoist Han.” Jin Qing replied back in an amiable tone. It seemed their relationship was quite good.

“Fellow Daoist Han?” The young cultivator’s gaze shifted between Han Li and Crooked Soul several times, not knowing who was who.

“I am Han Li. This person is my Senior Martial Brother Crooked Soul!” Han Li cupped his fists towards the youth and smiled. On his journey here, Han Li had come to an agreement with Jin Qing that it would be best to conceal the fact that Crooked Soul was his avatar.

Han Li also discovered that while this cultivator Hu appeared young with smooth and taut skin, there were wrinkles at the corners of his eyes. It seemed that while his age was quite old, he was good at maintaining his appearance.

This cultivator Hu should be the cultivator that had simultaneously discovered the two pearls with Jin Qing.

“I am Hu Yue. Although this is the first time I’ve seen you two, I hope that we will exchange cultivation insights in the future, as there are far too few rogue cultivators that are capable of reaching Core Formation.”

Hu Yue was quite adept at socializing. With only a few words, Han Li had already acquired a decent impression of him. Afterwards, he introduced the other two to Han Li.

“These two are Fairy [Shi Die](#) and Brother Jian. Fairy Shi is a greatly renowned formation spell master from Red Moon Island. I am confident that with Fellow Daoist Han alongside her, we will be certainly able to break through the formation. As for Brother Jian, he is a mid Core Formation cultivator, and will prove to be quite useful when breaking the formation.” Hu Yue introduced them with a smile.

Her name, 石蝶 Shi Die (pronounced di-eh), literally means “Stone Butterfly”

“Let’s get the ugly matters out of the way first. I am only here to assist you in breaking the formation. If any dangers appear after the magic formation breaks, I will not be able to act as I’m only at Foundation Establishment. Also, I will get first pick of whatever spoils that appear.”

The female cultivator called Shi Die had an ordinary appearance. However, her expression was haughty, and her words didn't contain a trace of politeness, much to the other's surprise.

“Red Moon Island? Could it be that Fellow Daoist Shi has some relation to Red Moon Island's Daoist Master Shi?” Jin Qing asked with a hesitant appearance.

After glancing at Jin Qing, she gave an indifferent reply, “He is my father.”

“Hehe, since it is like that, we will agree with your conditions!” Upon hearing her reply, he gave an immediate response, causing Han Li to look at him in astonishment.

Han Li then heard Jin Qing's voice transmission, “Fellow Daoist Han! Daoist Master Shi had treated me with great kindness long ago. I hope Fellow Daoist Han will forgive me.”

Han Li remained silent and casually smiled towards Jin Qing.

Chapter 417: Using One Formation To Break Another

“How about this? If Brother Han and Fairy Shi break through the formation, then they can have the first pick. We will distribute the rest afterwards.” Hu Yue revealed slight embarrassment and hastily mentioned Han Li, going through the motions for the time being.

The thin, shriveled cultivator surnamed Jian stood to the side and remained silent. He remained somewhat of a mystery to Han Li.

“Fellow Daoist Hu, wouldn’t it be better to first bring Brother Han and Fairy Shi to the formation and see whether or not the formation can be broken, and leave the distribution for afterwards? If they cannot break the formation, having this talk now would be useless.” Jin Qing proposed with a slight smile.

Hu Yue patted his head and promptly agreed, “Right! This formation spell is rather strange. Fellow Daoist Jin and I relentlessly assaulted it for an entire day. As a result, we only wasted our magic power on attacks that didn’t damage the formation spell in the slightest.”

The others agreed and followed in curious anticipation. They flew towards the back of the sand mountain and stopped near an unremarkable shallow slope.

“Please take a look. The area covered in a yellow mist is where

the spell formation is located.” Hu Yue pointed down at an area of the slope while in midair with a solemn expression.

The others didn’t need it pointed out as there was a huge, dense yellow mist that resembled a huge beast quietly crouching in wait. It gave them an incomprehensibly strange feeling. “Yi! It seems to be a dual attribute earth-wind formation spell. How interesting.” Upon seeing the formation spell’s grandeur, Shi Die’s eyes immediately brightened with excitement.

Han Li was brought back to attention upon hearing her and looked at her before turning his attention towards the formation spell. Not long after, his expression became solemn.

This formation spell was indeed a wind-earth dual attribute formation spell as the woman had said. At his current level, it would prove quite troublesome to break through it.

At that moment, Shi Die slowly descended to the edge of the spell formation and enthusiastically took out a strange magic tool.

She stroked the disc-shaped magic tool before pointing it towards the yellow mist and shooting out a green beam of light. The beam then disappeared without a trace into the formation.

Shi Die frowned as she took out a fiery crystal ball and rubbed it with her hand several times before sending it into the yellow mist as well. But after flashing several times with red light, the crystal ball was also submerged into the dense yellow mist.

At this point, the female cultivator's complexion turned slightly red, involuntarily revealing an expression of worry. She continued to probe the formation spell with another eight different magic tools. However, apart from a yellow copper mirror that was able to shine through an area of the mist, none of the other magic tools had any effect.

Having seen this, the rest of the party looked at one another and couldn't help but fly down onto the slope, approaching the woman.

After a moment more of observation, Han Li saw that the woman wanted to continue sending off magic tools and couldn't help but inwardly sigh. He gently asked, "Fairy Shi, how about you let me give it a try."

"Humph! If Fellow Daoist Han has any tricks, do not hesitate to make use of them. This young woman will not stop you." From her tone it was obvious that Fairy Shi had become frustrated.

Han Li became slightly annoyed, but he maintained a calm appearance. Without paying her any notice, he patted his storage pouch and took out over a dozen small flags of various colors. They then surrounded Han Li and began to slowly revolve around him.

"Formation flags." Upon seeing the small flags appear, Jin Qing astutely called out the name of the items.

The others gazed on in astonishment, not knowing what Han Li intended to do with the formation.

Han Li didn't pay any attention to their amazed expressions and just pointed to the formation flags. The formation flags then flew off in streaks of brilliance above the yellow mist. In accordance to the arranged pattern, they floated above the mist in a shape vaguely resembling the Big Dipper.

“Big Dipper Heaven-Earth Formation.” Shi Die recognized the formation by the flag's arrangement and revealed slight amazement.

Right after she spoke, the formation flags began to let out a series of low, long hums. They then each shot out a beam of light, joining together as a concentrated, thick pillar that shot down towards the yellow mist. Soon after, it completely disappeared.

Having seen this, the others turned their gaze towards the yellow mist, but saw that there wasn't the slightest irregularity.

“Brother Han, this is...” Jin Qing couldn't help but want to ask about a few of his doubts before he was interrupted by a sudden occurrence.

The originally still, unaffected mist suddenly released a muffled pop as if water were boiling inside of it. The mist started to roil as if a flood dragon were overturning them from within. It appeared as if the mists were suddenly alive.

At that moment, Han Li's eyes were radiant, and he shot out several magic seals towards the floating flag formation. Soon, the

formation flags began to shoot out a continuous, concentrated beam of multi-colored light.

Not long after, another astonishing scene occurred.

The rolling yellow mists started to rise and fall in rhythmic fluctuations and began to form countless protrusions that were the size of steam buns. The protrusions became larger and taller as time passed, as if a monster were about to fly out from within.

When the others saw this, they felt aghast and involuntarily took a few steps back.

Fairy Shi hastily ran back forty meters with a changed expression before stopping and turning her head around.

Bang, Bang...

A series of deafening booms came from the yellow mist.

The cultivators had earlier put up their guards. They all hastily readied their defenses and stood firm, watching as the mists heavily swayed as if they were being blown about by violent storm winds.

Only Shi Die looked on in anticipation, while all the others were fearful.

The extremely dense mist didn't end up expelling anything at all. It had just parted away like clouds and disappeared, revealing everything that the formation contained.

While Hu Yue and the others greatly rejoiced, Jin Qing quickly walked over to Han Li's side and said with a beaming smile, "Brother Han! I didn't think you possessed such great skill. Did you break through the entire formation?"

Han Li's mouth twitched before he gave the others an explanation with a bitter smile, "Break through the formation? Brother Jin greatly underestimates the formidability of ancient cultivator formations. I merely dispelled the formation spell's outermost layer, which was acting as a smokescreen."

Jin Qing was slightly disappointed to hear this, but without waiting for him to speak, Hu Yue suddenly spoke with joy, "Haha! That's fine. Take your time, we have plenty. Now, we have some confidence that this formation can be broken through after all."

Jin Qing blankly stared for a moment before agreeing with slight embarrassment, "Right! Us cultivators have no shortage of time. I was just being impatient."

At that moment, Shi Die's haughtiness disappeared without a trace. She gave a deep bow to Han Li and sincerely said, "This young woman is truly ignorant. I truly didn't think that Senior would take such an original approach in using formations to break formations. It has widened Junior's perspective. I hope Senior Han will provide some guidance on the Dao of Formation Spells."

Han Li had returned the gesture with slight surprise. This sudden turn of events had greatly changed his impression of her.

“This was but a minor trick. In truth, I actually don’t hold much understanding towards formation spells.” Han Li replied with a calm expression.

Han Li was being completely truthful! Were it not for her pointing out that the formation spell was a dual earth-wind attribute, Han Li would’ve had no way of knowing how to start and break through the illusion formation.

Han Li had only spent a mere twenty years researching formation spells. As such, his knowledge was quite limited. He had merely absorbed most of the theories of formation spells without gaining a deeper understanding.

The reason why he was able to make use of such a carefully prepared strategy, like using the Big Dipper Heaven-Earth formation flags to break the formation, was simply due to his confidence regarding Xin Ruting’s genius in formation spells.

Among Xin Ruting’s experiences, she had included the ingenious methods she had used to break through many different kinds of formation spells. Despite Han Li’s lack of understanding, he had made a reckless attempt.

However, this technique was extremely clever and had deeply shocked the others!

The other cultivators clearly considered Han Li's words as modesty and viewed him with respect. Han Li faintly smiled in response and didn't force himself to further explain. Instead, he turned his gaze to look at the true formation hidden behind the illusion formation.

After the mist faded away, a layer of dim yellow light was revealed, covering an area of about four hundred meters.

Chapter 418: Breaking Through The Formation

The newly revealed light barrier was thick and slightly blurred. Although it wasn't as obscure as the dense yellow mist, it still clouded the interior.

In addition to the outer barrier of light, there appeared to be several more layers within and a round pillar at the very center of the light barrier that stood about ten meters tall. Ancient decorative designs and characters seemed to be carved onto it, but no one was able to clearly make them out as their spiritual senses were being completely blocked by the light barrier.

But even stranger than the pillar were the countless, slender bands of rainbow light that erratically roamed within the light barrier. They appeared extremely abnormal as though they were alive.

When the others saw this, they couldn't help but click their tongues in astonishment.

Han Li's expression became gloomy and he carelessly revealed a trace of his suspicion.

Although he hadn't broken many ancient spell formations, Xin Ruyin's records had contained information on many types of ancient formation spells. From the aura and appearance of the formation spell before him, it didn't appear the slightest bit similar to an ancient spell formation. It even held a trace of evil Qi.

With that in mind, Han Li turned his gaze towards the nearby Shi Die.

He saw her examining the formation with great curiosity, but her face didn't reveal a trace of peculiarity. This caused Han Li, who didn't hold much confidence in formations, to self-mockingly believe that his judgement was wrong.

“It seems that today is coming to an end. Since Brother Han and the others have come here from so far away, how about they rest for a moment before coming back to break the formation tomorrow? After all, it doesn't seem like the formation can be broken through in a short amount of time!” Hu Yue spoke, showing great consideration towards Han Li and the others that had recently arrived.

As Han Li felt that this formation would take quite some time to unravel and was somewhat exhausted, he didn't refuse Hu Yue's suggestion.

Although Fairy Shi appeared to have identified the formation and was eager to continue, she didn't raise any objections towards Hu Yue's suggestion.

Thus, the group returned to their stone buildings.

Since there weren't that many stone buildings, Han Li and the others casually reshaped the earth to make some rooms and used a stone transformation technique on them before officially taking

residence in them.

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The following morning, Han Li and Shi Die arrived outside the light barrier and began their attribute tests and calculations.

The entire process of destroying the formation was very slow, especially at the start. The two felt somewhat overwhelmed, not knowing where to start. They'd often encounter a few insurmountable difficulties that they couldn't make any progress on, even after spending several days attempting to solve them.

But regardless of how it was said, the formation spell was inanimate while they were alive. It was only a matter of time before any formation spell was fully studied and comprehended. Even particularly strange formation spells could eventually be unraveled.

Through the cooperation of Han Li and Fairy Shi, this ancient formation spell proved to be no exception; its finer details were slowly being made clear bit by bit.

During this process, Han Li's view of the female cultivator greatly changed.

Although she came off as somewhat arrogant, she truly did have some skill. Not only did she fully comprehend all sorts of widely circulated formation spells, her analysis of the composition of the

formation spell was meticulous and flawless, causing Han Li to hold quite a bit of respect towards her.

Although Han Li saw that her accomplishments in the theory of formation spells weren't as impressive as Xin Ruyin's, she wasn't that far off.

But at the same time, Han Li felt somewhat puzzled. Why was it that all the formation spell experts he knew were female? Could it be that the Heavens had gifted female cultivators with an innate talent for formation spells?

However, comparing Fairy Shi to Xin Ruyin was an exercise in frustration. Although Fairy Shi's grasp on the theories were clear, she possessed far too few formation breaking methods. She would merely alternate through several kinds, and if none of them had any effect, she could only stare helplessly.

Han Li clearly knew his own limitations well. A mere dabbler in formation spells like himself was far inferior when compared to this woman. Understanding this, he never disputed anything the woman said and bluntly made use of Xin Ruyin's formation breaking tricks in accordance with what she said. In response to his actions, the woman became rather impressed by him.

As a result of these events, Han Li and Fairy Shi developed a tight coordination. After the female cultivator analyzed the weak points of the spell formation, Han Li would then think of a way to break through. Not only did their speed at unravelling the formation substantially increase, they learned much regarding what they were lacking from one another, to both their satisfaction.

As for Jin Qing and the others, they were unable to contribute for the time being and obediently meditated in the stone buildings, quietly waiting for the two to break the formation.

Three months later, Han Li and Shi Die called the others over to the slope. In their last few days of toil, they had nearly managed to break through the great formation. Now, only the last restriction remained. Once it was gone, the strange stone pillar at the center would be completely revealed.

The light barrier's appearance was now very different from when they started. Not only had it shrunk to less than half its original size, its original dim yellow had turned into a fiery scarlet red. After approaching it, one would feel a scorching heat being emitted.

But what was more baffling was that the countless bands of rainbow light within the light barrier had now turned into winged fire serpents. They endlessly roamed the area within the light barrier and continuously spouted out thin flames.

“What kind of demons are they?” When Jin Qing saw them, he couldn't help but ask in surprise.

The others also gazed on with astonishment.

“Fire attribute winged demon spirit fiends. They are rarely seen and only appear in extremely peculiar areas. It has an extremely short lifespan, lasting only several hours before fading away.

However, their innate demon flames are no less powerful than a Core Formation cultivator's core flame and their favorite foods are the souls of mortals and primal souls of cultivators. They will be very troublesome to deal with. The final restriction has obviously transformed the area into a Tri-Yang Field, allowing the fire spirits to continue to spawn. If any cultivators forcefully broke through the restriction without knowing this, they would surely fall prey to the winged fiends." Shi Die proudly explained.

After all, very few people knew of "Winged Fiends", but she was able to instantly recognize them.

"Winged fiends?" When Jin Qing and the others heard that the demons were capable of swallowing their primal souls, their expressions couldn't help but change.

"Since you've told us this, you two must have a method of breaking through. Please do not hesitate to give us instructions." The taciturn cultivator surnamed Jian suddenly spoke.

The others were slightly surprised upon hearing this and turned their gazes to Shi Die and Han Li.

Han Li faintly smiled but remained silent. Shi Die then grinned and spoke in a lovely voice, "Senior Han and I had quite a headache at the start, but after many days of discussion, we eventually thought of a safe method to break through the restriction. However, this requires the assistance of your strength."

Although this woman's expression was calm, her melodious voice

caused her to appear more charming.

“Fairy Shi, please tell us. We will definitely follow your and Senior Han’s instructions.” Hu Yue spoke with a chuckle.

Shi Die then bluntly gave out her orders, “To break through this formation, we require the simultaneous assistance of many water attribute magic tools. We’ve already collect several of these tools. We only require you all to grasp these magic tools and stand where we say. Once Senior Han breaks the formation, you fellow daoists will use your magic tools to eliminate the winged fiends that escape.”

At the side, Han Li added on, “Everyone, under no circumstances should you use your magic treasures to attack the demon spirits. These innate fire spirits will pose a great problem if we allow them to get too close to us. It will be too late by the time you want to run.”

Having seen Han Li’s solemn expression, Hu Yue and the others looked at each other and agreed with shivering hearts.

Afterwards, Han Li took out a small ruler, a small hammer, and a small pitchfork, giving them to Jin Qing, Crooked Soul and cultivator Jian respectively. As for Shi Die, she handed over a blue scarf to Hu Yue.

The party then stood nearby in their positions as directed by Shi Die. She then hastily backed away and took out a short sword magic tool before focusing her attention on Han Li.

Han Li didn't rush to act. He first took another careful look at his surroundings. Only after seeing that nothing was amiss did he feel confident enough to act. Several tens of blue formation flags and plates, formation setup tools for a water attribute formation spell, flew to Han Li's side and started to drift about erratically.

Han Li then wordlessly shifted his fingers, continuously releasing sounds of pops.

The formation flags and plates responded by surrounding the red light barrier and slowly falling into a formation.

The formation flags directly inserted themselves several inches deep into the earth, and the formation plates steadily floated several inches above the ground, forming a formation spell with a firm appearance.

Chapter 419: Desolate Antiquity

After the formation flags and plates were appropriately arranged, Han Li took a deep breath and was about to cast a technique before being interrupted by the sounds of whistles coming from the horizon. A blue radiance flashed through the horizon followed by a blue streak resembling a flood dragon quickly flying across the ocean. In the blink of an eye, it arrived above them.

Once the light faded away, an eccentric wearing dual swords on his back was revealed.

Upon seeing his appearance, the others were startled. Above them hovered a shriveled and thin figure, with a red, rash covered face, and fierce, triangular eyes framed by long, messy white hair. This odd looking man wore a black short sleeved shirt with a strange flower basket hanging from his waist. From his Spiritual Qi fluctuations, it appeared he was a mid Core Formation cultivator.

After getting a clear view of the area, the eccentric was surprised to see so many Core Formation cultivators. But after his gaze fell onto the red light barrier and Han Li's formation setup tools, his expression greatly changed.

“Are you Juniors seeking death? You dare to take advantage of this island lord's absence to pry into his project? Hurry up and get off this island!” The eccentric yelled with an ominous glare.

“Island lord?”

“This is yours?”

Hu Yue and Jin Qing looked at one another for a moment while Han Li and the others were at an even greater loss.

This wasn't an uninhabited island?

Hu Yue frowned and calmly asked, “Fellow Daoist is the lord of this island?”

“Obviously! I have already been this island's lord for several hundred years.” The eccentric replied without a trace of politeness.

“That's odd, my Brother Jin and I never caught a single glimpse of you on our last trip here!” Hu Yue stated in a calm manner.

“What? You've already come here once? Humph! It's the same as the current situation. You came here while I was preoccupied with matters off the island.” The eccentric glared at them with even greater anger.

Hu Yue sneered and derisively said, “So you're saying that you are the sole inhabitant of this island? Then your esteemed title of island lord is self conferred.”

As the restriction before him was about be eliminated, Hu Yue

was unwilling to pay any attention to the eccentric before him.

“Humph! Stop equivocating! In any case, you’ve performed the grave crime of destroying these restrictions. Since you don’t wish to leave, then I will help you remain here permanently!”

Suddenly, the wicker basket on his waist turned into a streak of chilling white Qi, shooting straight towards Hu Yue.

This time, Han Li and the others were the ones to be surprised.

Had this person gone mad? Did he not see how many Core Formation cultivators they had on their side? Was his mind addled?

Hu Yue responded in furious alarm. With a wave of his sleeve two red lights shot straight towards the incoming white mist. With a muffled peng, the white mist was scattered and dissipated in every direction.

“It seems this dog’s bark is bigger than his bite!” Hu Yue relaxed upon seeing the mist scatter and bluntly made some cutting remarks.

The eccentric remained silent but strangely smiled.

Hu Yue’s heart trembled and his expression suddenly changed, before yelling, “What’s going on? My flying knives!”

After breaking the white Qi transformed from the basket, the two flying knives were tottering in their original place as if they were failing.

Afterwards, the scattered white Qi quickly reassembled itself, and with a flash of radiance, it reformed back into its appearance as a flower basket. The two flying knives were trapped inside the flower basket while enveloped in the white Qi, incapable of breaking free.

Hu Yue looked on in disbelief as his magic treasure was restrained. The other's also paled in response.

However, the eccentric didn't give them any time to think. He coldly laughed and his shoulders flashed with light. Shooting down two streaks of grey swordlight towards Hu Yue.

As he was next to Hu Yue, Jin Qing naturally found it embarrassing to just stand idle. He flicked his hand and threw out a small block stamp which grew larger as it smashed towards the grey light.

With a clap of thunder, the three magic treasures released brilliant flashes of interwoven colors.

At that moment, the cultivator surnamed Jian looked at Han Li and Crooked soul before silently raising his hand, and shooting a pitchfork glowing with black and white Qi towards the eccentric.

Han Li inwardly sighed. Since everyone else had acted, he and Crooked Soul could no longer just stand idle and had to join them against the eccentric. With that thought, Han Li and Crooked Soul released their Immemorial Bowl and Green Brilliant Dagger, sending them into the fray.

When the eccentric saw this, he didn't reveal any fear. Instead he bellowed in savage laughter and spat out a pearl of black blood towards their magic treasures.

A huge series of explosions rang out!

Greatly going against their expectations, the bead had released a black radiance just as their magic treasures touched the bead and exploded, causing great spiritual damage to the magic treasures and all of their lights to immediately dim.

The cultivator surnamed Jian felt great heartache and appeared extremely regretful. His hands formed into an incantation seal to retrieve the flying pitchfork. From that strike, he would need to nurture it in his primal soul for about a year before recovering to normal.

However, he was late in retrieving his magic treasure.

As the eccentric coldly laughed, his wicker basket flashed with white light and suddenly shot towards the magic treasures in a streak of white light, entrapping them within.

The cultivator surnamed Jian suddenly thought of something upon seeing this and yelled out in despair, “An ancient treasure! You’re using a Desolate Antiquity!”

Han Li was stunned upon seeing this. A “Desolate Antiquity” was in fact a magic treasure refined by ancient cultivators. This type of magic treasure had a single divine ability, but its power was immense and incomparable to the power of common magic treasures of the present. The magic treasure refinement methods and the materials of antiquity were substantially different from those of the present. Their treasures were incapable of being withdrawn into the body and could only be carried physically like a magic tool.

This was also the only method of differentiating the Desolate Antiquity from common magic treasures.

Having now seen the abnormality of the flower basket and recalling that the basket had been hanging from his waist at the start, it was impossible for him to not realize the true identity of this magic treasure.

As for the “Heaven Opposing Spears” that were used on the Infant Carp Beast used by the Six United Palaces, they were also Desolate Antiquities that had been passed down.

Although Han Li was somewhat startled by the announcement of this ancient treasure, he had many killing moves up his sleeves. Still, he didn’t take the initiative to act as he was convinced the

more tricks he kept hidden for later, the easier it would be to effectively deal with the upcoming moments of danger.

In addition, he clearly understood that even if the enemy had an ancient treasure, he wouldn't be able to easily deal with so many allied Core Formation cultivators. It would suffice to only display the ability equivalent to a common Core Formation cultivator.

With that thought, apart from using the entirety of their control to wrench their magic treasures away from the white Qi, Han Li and Crooked Soul didn't take any unusual actions and watched on with a detached gaze.

He was confident that someone else would inevitably take the initiative!

As he had expected, Hu Yue and the others revealed a trace of joy upon hearing that the flower basket was an ancient treasure. Since the eccentric had taken the first move, it was only proper for them to loot the treasure after they joined hands and exterminated him.

Thus, after a moment of hesitation, the cultivator surnamed Jian formed an incantation gesture with his hands, causing three streaks of black light to emerge from his storage pouch: three-meter-tall black banners with a murderous aura.

He then opened his mouth, shooting out a thread of black Qi towards the black banners. The banners released a series of ghostly wails, causing the other cultivators to become shaken and overwhelmed.

Meanwhile, Hu Yue bluntly abandoned his attempts to regain control of his flying knives and twisted his hands together, releasing a burst of thunderous azure lightning strikes.

With raised eyebrows, Jin Qing suddenly cast a magic seal towards his magic treasure, causing his white block stamp to release a dragon's cry and increase in size several times over.

Having seen the three make such great displays of might, Han Li inwardly grinned and reckoned that the eccentric was about to suffer a great blow.

But despite displaying slight surprise upon seeing the three's vicious attacks, his sneer soon returned. He tore off his short sleeved shirt and revealed his bare upper body.

Han Li nearly bit his own tongue in surprise.

Aside from his shriveled chest, two fist-sized human skulls were biting down on each side of his abdomen. Each of the skulls were jet-black and had long, messy hair. In addition, the skulls wriggled incessantly as if they were alive.

At that moment, the thunderous azure lightning and the three black banners had entered the eccentric's sight. He lightly extended two of his fingers and started to speak an odd incantation.

The two human skulls began to release low, muffled sobs before flying away from his abdomen and biting off the eccentric's two extended fingers. They then excitedly charged forward to meet the thunderous lightning and the black banners.

Chapter 420: The Might Of The Gold Devouring Beetles

Han Li was startled when he saw the human skulls and was reminded of the Six Devil Dao Sect's Ghost Spirit Sect.

The Ghost Spirit Sect disciples used human skull shaped magic tools to attack, but they were merely inanimate objects, unlike these black skulls that seemed to have a life of their own.

Han Li experienced an even greater shock when one of the skulls collided against?

The cultivator surnamed Jian loudly shouted and pointed to his banners, causing them to shoot out a dense number of black threads. The threads then intertwined to form a huge net before rushing towards the incoming human skull.

The threads were extremely fine and glossy. They also carried a faint black Qi that was clearly unordinary.

Upon seeing the black threads release themselves, the skull's eye sockets flashed with red light, and it erratically closed and opened its mouth before countless wisps of dark green fire surged out from its mouth.

Upon contact, the countless black threads instantly combusted as if they had met their nemesis, quickly turning into rising clouds of azure smoke.

The cultivator surnamed Jian greatly paled at the sight and hastily formed another incantation gesture, wanting to activate another divine ability of the black banners.

The black skulls suddenly swelled to the size of a carriage wheel before spouting out a streak of black light for a breath of time. The three black banners were then wrapped up by the streak of light and pulled into the skull's mouth. Afterwards, the skull starting chomping down with force. After a few cracks and bangs, the black banners were entirely shattered. At this same moment, the cultivator surnamed Jian turned deathly pale from feeling his connection to the black banners sever.

“Demon! You dare to destroy my treasures?” The cultivator Jian shouted out in furious alarm, but his eyes betrayed a sliver of fear.

Although the others were unaware, he fully understood that the three black banners were desolate antiquities. It had previously dealt with many formidable opponents, but now, it had unexpectedly met its end in a freakish skull's mouth.

At that same moment, Hu Yue's thunderous lightning was drawn into the other skull's mouth and was rendered completely ineffective.

Hu Yue and cultivator Jian took a mutual glance at each other and couldn't help but feel an urge to retreat.

This had also left Han Li astonished, and he now realized why the

eccentric dared to fight against a group of cultivators. He had much to rely on. Not only did he possess many magic treasures, but each of them possessed remarkable abilities. It seemed that if he did not lend them any assistance, they would suffer a great defeat and be forced to retreat.

Han Li didn't wish for that development as he had spent several months of effort on breaking this great formation. He was unwilling to allow this outsider to spoil his efforts now that he was on the verge of success. Additionally, although Han Li didn't want to risk making a clumsy display, he wanted to test the power of the Gold Devouring Beetles and see whether or not they deserved their ranking on the list of exotic insects. As the eccentric before him was an unordinary Core Formation cultivator, he seemed to make for an ideal test subject.

With that thought, Han Li took another glance at the fray.

Hu Yue and the others were flusteredly flying around in the sky, bombarding the two skulls that were chasing them with low grade magic techniques. They clearly understood that common magic treasures would have no effect on those demonic items and could only cease their offensive for the time being.

As for Jin Qing's large white block seal, it hadn't shown itself to be particularly powerful. It had found itself dragged into the flower basket after being wound around by the white Qi when he had least expected it, causing Jin Qing's face to be laced with sweat.

As for Crooked Soul who was at his side and the Foundation

Establishment Shi Die, they were only able to gaze on, incapable of providing any assistance.

After seeing this, Han Li took a deep glance at the eccentric before unhesitatingly taking out a bulging spiritual beast pouch with a single hand.

Han Li's action seemed to have caught the eccentric's attention, possibly due to his powerful spiritual sense. He immediately focused his attention on Han Li and fished something out from his bosom with an ominous expression as if wanting to take out another magic treasure to deal with Han Li.

In response, Han Li decided to seize the initiative.

He lightly tossed the Spirit Beast Pouch into the air and quickly struck the pouch with an azure incantation seal cast from his other hand. With a tremble, the spirit beast pouch spouted out several tens of spheres sharply shooting towards the eccentric in streaks of light.

These spheres were about a foot large and consisted of the colors of both silver and gold. As soon as the eccentric saw them, he revealed an expression of disdain and took out a jet-black [dharma wheel](#), thoughtlessly throwing it out with a cold laugh.

An eight-spoked wheel that holds much significance in Buddhism(dharmachakra)

As the object whistled, it grew several times in size and spun towards the incoming spheres.

With a succession of pings, the spheres turned into specks of gold and silver light upon colliding with the wheel, as they were being shattered.

“Ha, ha...” The eccentric roared with laughter and pointed towards Han Li, ordering it to slice towards him.

But at that moment, a burst of buzzing appeared, growing increasingly louder. In an instant, the sound had become ear-piercing, causing everyone to look in the sound’s direction with astonishment. The eccentric had also replaced his mad laughter with bewilderment.

The fragments from the spheres had become alive and turned into several thousands of thumb-sized gold-silver beetles, densely scattered nearby the wheel. The sharp buzz produced from their flapping wings had inspired great apprehension.

Han Li didn’t give the eccentric any idle time to think and used his spiritual sense to order the beetles to fly towards the wheel without any regard for their lives. In an instant, the magic treasure had been stained with the colors of gold and silver.

“You’re courting death!” The eccentric recovered from his surprise and formed an incantation gesture with his hands, causing his wheel to release clouds of black as it spun, intending to eliminate the exotic insects.

However, the following scene had left the eccentric stunned. As soon as the pitch-black mist appeared, the beetles opened their

mouth and cleanly gobbled it away, leaving not a single speck behind.

As for the wheel's high speed rotations, it only managed to throw off a small portion of the Gold Devouring beetles. A majority of them had closely stuck onto it and fearlessly ripped it to shreds.

Han Li inwardly rejoiced at the eccentric's aghast expression.

In the blink of an eye, the wheel shrank at a visible pace until there was nothing left. After the wheel was cleanly devoured, the buzzing grew louder once more.

The eccentric's complexion had now turned slightly green!

Han Li bluntly pointed to the swarm of Gold Devouring Beetles and had them turn into a large gold-silver cloud before flocking towards the eccentric.

Now knowing the ferociousness of the beetles, the eccentric's face revealed panic and he quickly beckoned towards the black skulls chasing after the sweat drenched members. With several flickers, they flew back to the eccentric and sinisterly blocked his front.

Finally able to gasp for air, Hu Yue and cultivator Jian let out a large sigh of relief and stopped in the distance, staring at the scene with slight amazement.

The eccentric appeared ill at ease. He summoned a short dagger into his hand with a flash of light. After a short moment of hesitation, he chopped down with a fierce expression, severing another two of his fingers.

The two skulls immediately flew to each eat one. Soon after, they release a strange howl as if they were extremely delighted.

With widened eyes, the eccentric soon opened his mouth, shooting out two black lights at the skull's forehead. The two skulls then let out a series of painful groans and started to undergo a strange change.

With audible cracks, two strange horns similar to a mountain goats sprouted from the tops of their skulls, and their fierce sharp teeth grew by several inches, becoming even sharper in the process. And over the span of a few breathes, their hair turned blood-red, completely changing the skulls into ghost heads.

“Go!” With the skulls’ transformation complete, the eccentric let out a breath of relief and painfully used his finger stump to command them towards the insect swarm.

The ghost heads’ eyes flashed with a queer green light before obediently charging off towards the insect swarm with a long whistle.

When the Gold Devouring Beetles saw the ghost heads shooting towards them, they separated into two swarms under Han Li’s command, each flying to meet one of the ghost heads.

The transformed ghost heads widely opened their mouths and spat out wisps of dark green flame that were several times thicker than before. Upon impact, a series of explosions pushed the swarms of Gold Devouring Beetle back about ten meters.

The beetle swarms were in disorder.

The eccentric revealed a trace of joy, but that had lasted for only a short moment.

The wisps of fire released towards the Gold Devouring Swarm had done nothing but send a couple of beetles tumbling. But afterwards, they continued to fly forward as if they had not suffered any damage in the slightest.

The eccentric now wore a face of disbelief.

The will-o-wisps his ghost heads spat out were more powerful than Core Flame. How were they incapable of frying a few insects?

But despite not being able to deal with the Gold Devouring Beetles with his ghost heads, the flame wisps still kept the beetles at bay. It appeared they were stuck in a deadlock.

The eccentric frowned and started to ponder about a countermeasure.

At that moment, a buzzing sound occurred in a volume several times louder than before. When the eccentric raised his head, his face turned deathly pale as if it were devoid of blood.

Chapter 421: Spirit Sealing Pillar

In the distant sky at an unknown time, a huge cloud of insects spanning over a hundred meters had appeared, staining that part of the sky gold and silver. The huge buzzing seemed to be coming from this new cloud of insects.

Underneath the insect cloud, Han Li looked at the eccentric with a gaze as if he were looking at a corpse. He commanded, “Go!”

Suddenly, the huge insect cloud flew towards the eccentric as an overbearing sky-shrouding shadow.

The eccentric’s limbs grew ice-cold. This insect cloud was over ten times larger than the previous. It wasn’t something he could withstand. In his terror, he felt a sudden desire to flee.

With an unsightly expression, he recalled his transformed flower basket. He then struck his two ghost heads with blood-red magic seals, and began to chant a cryptic incantation. As for the weapons that were disabled and had been held within the white mist, they were tossed away without hesitation.

The eccentric’s decisiveness surprised Han Li.

The two ghost heads madly spat out several more wisps of flames as they retreated, but Han Li wasn’t about to let them slip away so easily.

Under his command, the huge insect cloud thoroughly drowned the ghost heads and their flames in an instant. The flames were cleanly consumed by the several tens of thousands of Gold Devouring Beetles in an instant, and the ghost heads' themselves were filled with countless Gold Devouring Beetles.

With this, Han Li knew that the skulls were already finished. But just as he wanted to collect the Gold Devouring Beetles and go chase after the eccentric, he heard two enormous explosions.

The two ghost heads had self detonated in twin blazes of green flame, engulfing a large portion of the Gold Devouring Beetles. Han Li was initially left reeling by the scene but that soon disappeared.

From his mental connection, apart from the several hundred closest to the heart of the explosion, a vast majority of his Gold Devouring Beetles were unscathed.

It seemed that these immature Gold Devouring Beetles were not invulnerable. After a certain limit, they were still capable of being destroyed.

However, their sturdiness was already much to Han Li's satisfaction. After all, the Gold Devouring Beetles only suffered damage from the extremely powerful detonation of the ghost heads. He was confident that any common Core Formation cultivator wouldn't stand a chance against these insects.

With that thought, Han Li wordlessly turned into an azure streak

and collected his Gold Devouring Beetles before chasing after the eccentric.

Han Li's thoughts were quite simple. Since deep hatred was planted between him and the eccentric, it was naturally better to settle this problem once and for all. Not wanting to leave a potential enemy, he couldn't allow him to easily escape.

A second later, Crooked Soul joined him and flew next to Han Li as a streak of yellow light, joining in the pursuit.

As for the others, they glanced at each other while staying in their original places. It seemed that for the time being, they were incapable of believing that Han Li had single-handedly forced the eccentric to flee.

The eccentric's escape method was quite impressive. Even when using the entirety of his strength to propel his green brilliance dagger, the distance between them was only gradually increasing. In the blink of an eye, the three had traveled over twenty kilometers and were about to leave the scope of the barren island.

Seeing this, Han Li's eyes glinted with cold light. After taking a deep breath, seven palm-sized emerald green swords suddenly shot from his body.

After flying a circle around his body, the small swords merged into a huge green sword. With a blur, Han Li and Crooked Soul arrived on the huge sword. It then flashed with green radiance and cut through the sky as an emerald streak of light that was nearly

forty meters long, increasing their speed by nearly fifty percent.

After the time it took to make a cup of tea, Han Li had caught up to the eccentric. After seeing the black light that was singularly focused on flying, Han Li waved his arm with an icy expression. Two small emerald swords shot towards it along with Crooked Soul's Immemorial Bowl.

The escaping eccentric had clearly seen that his relentless pursuers had released their magic treasures towards him. He immediately responded by throwing a skull towards them. Afterwards, the eccentric continued flying without looking back.

According to the eccentric's thoughts, the skull should be able to buy him some precious time at the very least.

Han Li's expression darkened, and he silently cast an incantation gesture. His two flying swords then flashed with green light and turned into four swordlights which were indistinguishable from one another. Two of these swordlights and the immemorial bowl flew straight towards the skull while the other two swordlights combined to form a foot-long flying sword. It rushed past the skull and shot towards the back of the eccentric without a sound.

The flying sword became much faster after combining together and arrived behind the eccentric in the blink of an eye.

However, the eccentric felt that something was amiss and turned his head, discovering an emerald streak of light that was only fifteen meters away from him.

The eccentric's face turned deathly pale. Responding quickly to the emergency, he opened his mouth and spewed a puff of black Qi towards the flying sword. Afterwards, he hastily flew away, wanting to escape.

Under Han Li's command, the flying sword continued straight through the black Qi without any hesitation. As it approached, an arc of faint golden lightning struck the black Qi and thoroughly blew it away, leaving the flying sword completely unobstructed.

Then with a flash of green light, the emerald flying sword pierced through the eccentric.

The eccentric looked down at the flying sword in his chest with an expression of complete disbelief. Without the chance to say a single word, he was struck with faint golden lightning and turned to ash.

Han Li hastily approached. After blurring a few times, he reappeared with three items in his hands and focused his attention on them. Apart from the flower basket ancient antiquity, there was also a storage pouch and a scroll painting sparkling with red light. From paintings stealthily contained Spiritual Qi, even if it wasn't a desolate antiquity, it was still undoubtedly an unordinary magic treasure.

Delighted, Han Li gently unrolled the scroll and was soon stunned.

After staring at the scroll for a long while, Han Li slowly rolled it back up and wore a contemplative expression. Forcefully suppressing the suspicions he had in mind, Han Li flew towards the skull in silence.

Now lacking a master, the black skull floated in the air without movement. Although it still retained a trace of its evil Qi, it now completely lacked any trace of its former intelligence.

After taking a look, Han Li slightly frowned. In truth, this was the first time he had seen an item like this. He faintly felt that this item definitely had a bad history, but he still felt reluctant to just let it go. After a moment of hesitation, he decided to store it in a jade box.

After circling around the area once more, Han Li flew back with Crooked Soul. On the way, he encountered Jin Qing and the others who on their way to assist him.

Having seen Han Li and Crooked Soul return completely unharmed, they crowded around him in pleasant surprise.

“Fellow Daoist Han, what happened to that eccentric? Did he escape?” Jin Qing couldn’t help but ask.

“He died by my hand!” Han Li calmly said.

“He’s dead? That’s great. From his profuse, evil Qi, we would have definitely found ourselves hopelessly entangled if he decided

to pursue us in the future. That would've proved to be extremely troublesome.” Jin Qing replied with a large breath of relief.

With slightly changed expressions, the nearby Hu Yue and cultivator Jian looked at Han Li with gazes of involuntary respect.

After all, one's capability defined one's status in the cultivation world.

Afterwards, the party returned to their original location where Fairy Shi was worriedly waiting for them.

The group gathered together once more. After some discussion, Han Li felt that it would be best to quickly break through the formation in order to prevent any further unexpected incidents from occurring.

Thus, the group once again got into formation. After refocusing his heart, Han Li placed down the formation flags and plates.

The destruction of the last restriction was exceptionally smooth. After the scarlet light barrier was destroyed, the “Winged Fiends” contained within were cleanly eliminated by their water attribute magic tools.

The party revealed joy and soon turned their gazes towards the strange, exposed stone pillar at the center.

With no restrictions in the way, the group was clearly able to see

the stone pillar with their spiritual sense and eyesight.

The stone pillar's talisman markings were extremely strange. The pillar was covered in eight huge ancient talisman scripts that spiralled around it from top to bottom along with countless strange stripes. In addition, the stone pillar was embedded with extremely rare Yin-Yang Jade in an even distribution. They occasionally flashed with dim black and white lights.

After looking at this for some time, they looked at each other in confusion and sunk into contemplation, bitterly attempting to recall any relatable information.

“Spirit Sealing Pillar!” After a short moment, the weakest among them, Shi Die, suddenly shouted out the name of the stone pillar in alarm.

The others were stunned upon hearing this, but they soon looked at each other in bewilderment.

“Fairy Shi, are you certain? Is this really a Spirit Sealing Pillar?” Hu Yue couldn't help but ask with doubt.

“Absolutely! I possess a book of ancient formation spells that particularly mentions the Spirit Sealing Pillar. From its appearance and those talisman markings, it is exactly as was described in the book. Don't be fooled into believing it to be some common stone pillar. It was forged from over ten extremely precious tool refinement materials. This lone pillar is worth about six thousand spirit stones.” Shi Die gazed at this pillar with excitement.

Chapter 422: Sevenglow Lotus

The Spirit Sealing Pillar was actually a huge magic tool used by ancient cultivators to seal the nearby Spiritual Qi and isolate it from the outside the world. This rarely seen magic tool was typically used in one of two ways.

One purpose was to seal extremely rare spirit medicines and spirit herbs, preventing their spiritual nature from weakening due to outside exposure. Another purpose was to suppress particularly formidable ghost spirits or devils and prevent them from escaping. Regardless of which purpose this particular Spirit Sealing Pillar served, its value would prove to be extremely significant to Han Li and company.

Spirit medicines have their obvious uses, but if the Spirit Sealing Pillar was suppressing devils, they would prove to be optimal materials for increasing the strength of one's magic treasure by subduing and containing them within their magic treasures.

However, they clearly understood that if the Spirit Seal Pillar was used to seal a spirit or a devil it was guaranteed to be difficult for them to subdue it after it was released. There was even a chance that it would cause backlash instead.

Although everyone looked at each other with pleasant surprise, nobody brashly suggested immediately toppling the pillar to see what was underneath.

After a long while of silence, Jin Qing bitterly laughed and

muttered, “This is quite the conundrum! But since we’ve spent quite a bit of effort, nobody wishes to turn back, yes?”

“If you want to leave, then leave! I will be staying here! Don’t say that there might not be devils within. We must be ready to attempt to subdue whatever is inside.” Cultivator Jian coldly spoke with his hands behind his back.

Jin Qing smiled in response and turned towards Hu Yue and asked, “How about you, Fellow Daoist Hu?”

After muttering to himself for a moment, Hu Yue gave a resolute answer, “Fellow Daoist, you should know that because us rogue cultivators are unwilling to be restricted by others, our freedom comes at the cost of poverty. We must seize every opportunity we are given!”

Jin Qing didn’t reveal any surprise and turned his gaze to Han Li.

With a raised brow, Han Li indifferently said, “I am indifferent. If a majority wishes to see what is underneath, I will stay as well.” Since he now had seventy-two Bamboo Azurecloud Swords refined from Gold Lightning Bamboo, he had nothing to fear from demons and ghosts.

“Don’t bother asking me. Although I am only a Foundation Establishment cultivator, my father fortuitously gave me a devil repelling magic treasure. Even if I lack the strength to protect myself, no harm will come to me.” Without waiting for Jin Qing to ask her, Shi Die took the initiative to answer after tilting her head.

“Alright! Since everyone is unwilling to return empty handed, let’s push the pillar over. Even so, please be careful!” Jin Qing lightly sighed and spoke with a cautious expression.

“Hehe! There is no need for Fellow Daoist Jin’s warning as nobody here is willing to treat their lives lightly. But still, let’s get the ugly matters out of the way first. If any devils or ghosts appear, then the subduer will have the right of ownership. Fighting over them is forbidden.” Cultivator Jian slowly spoke with a strange glint flashing from his eyes.

“That is obvious. It is only natural to yield in accordance to skill, considering the bounty’s nature,” Jin Qing spoke in agreement.

The others didn’t have any objections.

When cultivator Jian saw this, his spirit was roused, and he revealed a trace of joy.

Shi Die shot him a sideways glance and mysteriously smiled, asking, “Could it be that fellow Daoist has a special method to subdue devils? Is that why you’re so confident?”

“That’s... I won’t conceal this from you all. My cultivation art has a divine ability specialized in dealing with ghosts and devils. I had originally believed it wouldn’t be of much use, and I didn’t expect that I would be able to finally make use of it.” After some slight hesitation, cultivator Jian nodded and gave a straightforward explanation.

“The skulls of the wicked eccentric that Han Li had exterminated seemed to be refined from demons. It seemed that Fellow Daoist Jian had quite a bit of trouble with them?” Shi Die spoke with doubt.

“Sigh, it seems my poor performance has caused doubt. My divine ability requires prior preparation in order to be utilized. That wicked eccentric had caught me unprepared, and as a result, I made for a sorry sight.” Cultivator Jian shook his head and explained with slight embarrassment.

Shi Die nodded and turned her gaze back towards the Spirit Sealing Pillar.

“Since everyone is unwilling to give up, let’s start! It is a bit troublesome to overthrow a Spirit Sealing Pillar as it can only be released after turning it several times with great force.” Shi Die excitedly explained.

When the others heard this, they narrowed their eyes. Although they were cultivators, they didn’t actually possess much physical strength. Even with immense strength talismans, the group wouldn’t be able to physically shift such a huge stone pillar.

Han Li frowned and inwardly sent out a command.

As Crooked Soul walked towards the stone pillar, he said in a deep voice, “Let me do it. I have quite a bit of strength.”

Hu Yue and the others revealed slight amazement. After all, Crooked Soul had yet to speak since arriving here, but now suddenly he took the initiative to solve this matter.

“Then we will have to trouble Fellow Daoist Crooked Soul!” Shi Die said with curiosity.

Crooked Soul continued to walk towards the stone pillar as if he hadn't heard her. His body first flashed with yellow light before he placed an immense strength talisman on his body. Afterwards, he rolled up his sleeves, took a deep breath, and clasped the stone pillar in his arms.

The ten meter tall stone pillar released a rumbling noise and started to turn bit by bit, much to the delight of the others.

Crooked Soul's thick, taut arms were completely exposed and shined faintly of red light. After the stone pillar had been turned three times, he used all of his strength to push the pillar to the side before suddenly moving away.

The stone pillar fell to the side with a series of booms, causing the ground to tremble for a moment. From the deep groove it left behind when landing, it was clear that the stone pillar was extremely heavy.

However, the others didn't pay any attention to the stone pillar, and instead focused their attention on the large hole left behind from its collapse.

The hole was pitch-black and from it blew a cold wind, but it also had a flight of small white stairs that led downward.

“Let’s go!” After looking at the hole for a moment, cultivator Jian decided to take the lead.

After some hesitation, the others followed after him. Now that they’ve made it this far, no one was willing to turn tail.

Han Li stood in his original spot with a single hand grasping his chin with a contemplative expression as he watched the other cultivators climb down the stairs with barely concealed excitement.

He then took out the scroll painting with the sparkling red light and fiddled with it.

He pondered for a moment while he looked at it before putting it away and climbing down the stairs. Crooked Soul closely followed after him.

The tunnel was rather deep. After a quarter hour, Han Li finally reached the bottom.

Their eyes brightened upon seeing a large hall that spanned over seventy meters appear before them. The hall’s roof was embedded with fist-sized luminescent pearls causing the hall to shine with milky-white light. As the walls were sparkling with bits of light,

this exceptionally beautiful sight appeared to be caused by magic techniques.

In addition, there were two semi-circle doors to the side of the hall's entrance that led to an unknown location.

Hu Yue and the others stood motionlessly at the center of the hall. They were all staring in the same direction and occasionally whispered to each other as if they were studying something.

Han Li walked towards them in large strides with great curiosity.

“What’s that?” Han Li revealed astonishment after catching sight of what they were staring at.

There was a flawlessly white skeleton that was reclined at the side of a small pond. An emerald-green, foot-long arrow penetrated its skull and nailed it to the ground, appearing quite strange.

But that had only caught their initial gaze. Afterwards, their focus had been excitedly drawn towards the three-colored lotus floating at the center of the pond's surface.

Although the colorful lotus had yet to bloom and was still just a bud, it was the size of a bowl and glowed with a tri-colored radiance of azure, red, and yellow.

But what was most inconceivable about it was the exquisite rainbow that appeared several inches above it. Its glistening light

was extremely entrancing.

Additionally, the pond water wasn't ordinary water; it was a dense white paste that strongly emitted a strange fragrance.

“A Sevensglow Lotus! It has to be. I thought that this only existed in legend. That water... is it the legendary thousand year stone milk?” Hu Yue muttered to himself with widened eyes.

“No wonder there were so many formation spell restrictions placed down along with the Spirit Sealing Pillar. With these two items, setting down another dozen layers of restrictions wouldn't be excessive.” Shi Die stated while mesmerized by the colorful lotus.

Jin Qing woke from his surprise and turned to look at the skeleton. He bafflingly asked, “But what about this skeleton? Could it have been the cave residence's master?”

“Why does it matter? We've struck it rich! Although this Sevensglow Lotus only shines with three colors, it will still sell for an exorbitant price at auction.” Cultivator Jian directly changed the subject with greed filling his eyes.

Chapter 423: Extreme Poison

Han Li's calm voice sounded out from behind the other cultivators, "Is this Sevenshadow Lotus very famous? Does it have any particular uses?"

Upon hearing him, cultivator Jian and the others sobered up and felt their hearts tremble. They unnaturally turned their gazes to Han Li.

They had all witnessed the power of his Gold Devouring Beetles while they were fighting together, and now they feared that they wouldn't prove to be his match. Now that such a precious item had appeared, they unconsciously felt unease.

Even Jin Qing, who had implored him to come here, revealed a trace of unease.

Upon seeing these people's expressions, Han Li was able to roughly tell what they were thinking. A wry smile flashed through his eyes.

However, he quickly concealed this and asked with an unknowing expression, "The name of this Sevenshadow Lotus is quite peculiar! I've read through quite a few records, but I haven't the slightest idea what it is."

The other cultivators looked at each other. Hu Yue let out a dry cough before giving Han Li an explanation with a smile, "It seems that Fellow Daoist Han has spent most of his time in secluded

cultivation and rarely deals with external matters. The name of this Sevenshine Lotus won't be found in Spirit Herb Records as its name is only passed down through oral legends. It is said that it would be able to bring mortals back to life and can regrow the flesh from just bones. When cultivators take it, it is said to be able to raise one's cultivation by an entire grade. This is an immortal item from legends!"

Upon finishing his explanation, Hu Yue was showing inconceivable excitement despite looking at Han Li with a trace of vigilance.

Han Li squinted his eyes and spoke with slight disbelief, "Is it really so miraculous? Is it even true?"

"We have no idea as nobody we know has seen a Sevenshine Lotus before. We didn't even believe such an item existed until today. However, it is certain that there are cultivators that will spend a great amount of spirit stones for it." Hu Yue spoke with a chuckle.

"So it was like that!" Han Li indifferently nodded his head and shifted his attention to the flawless white skeleton lying on the floor with an interested expression.

Seeing that Han Li was unconcerned and didn't appear interested in monopolizing the rewards, the others let out a breath of relief.

"Fellow Daoist Jian, how about you go and collect the Sevenshine Lotus? After we auction it, let's evenly split the spirit stones. Fairy Shi, we'll have to trouble you to look for any formation spell

restrictions near the pond.” Hu Yue gave a meaningful glance at cultivator Jian and Shi Die.

After taking a thoughtful look at Han Li, they agreed.

Having felt that Han Li was far too strong, they united together with a feeling of suspicion towards Han Li.

After Jin Qing heard this, his face revealed a trace of hesitation as if he wanted to say something. But after some thought, he decided to stay silent.

At that moment, Han Li was half-crouched next to the skeleton and was carefully examining it. Hu Yue, who was carefully gazing at him, felt somewhat relieved.

After Shi Die used a few magic tools to examine the surroundings, she confirmed, “There are no restrictions near the pond. Fellow Daoist Jian may collect the lotus without obstruction.”

Upon hearing this, cultivator Jian immediately stepped forward with delight.

Hu Yue’s expression stirred as if he had thought of something and hastily warned, “Be careful. I’ve heard that the Sevenglow Lotus can’t touch any magic tools. It must be picked up by one’s own hand or else it will immediately wither!”

Cultivator Jian responded with a wave of his hand, expressing acknowledgement. At that moment, his thoughts were completely focused on the Sevenshadow Lotus bud.

Standing beside the pond crafted from fine, beautiful jade, cultivator Jian bowed over the water and extended his arm towards the tri-colored flower bud with great caution.

Shi Die and the others watched his every move and couldn't help but hold their breaths.

“Yi!” He cried out in astonishment.

“What happened?” Hu Yue and Shi Die simultaneously said the same words with worried expressions. It was unknown whether they were concerned for the flower or the flower picker.

Cultivator Jian withdrew his fingers and flexed them. He puzzlingly said, “It is a bit strange. This flower is rather sturdy and is very difficult to pull out.”

“If you cannot pull the whole plant out, then how about just picking it!” Hu Yue faintly rolled his eyes and suggested.

“Directly picking it off? That would greatly diminish its value!” Shi Die shook her head with a face of disapproval.

“Wait, I'll try it again with an immense strength talisman.” Cultivator Jian took out a yellow talisman and slapped it on his

body. Afterwards, he rigidly grabbed the flowerbud three inches beneath the surface of the water and pulled with all his strength.

“Stop!” Han Li suddenly shouted while still looking down at the skeleton.

Hu Yue and the others felt their hearts thump and were slightly bewildered.

Cultivator Jian was startled, but seeing that he was so close to the dazzling flowerbud, his heart became stubborn, and he put force into his grip. However, the Sevenshine Lotus didn't budge in the slightest as if it were welded in place.

This set cultivator Jian's heart aflame with impatience and he instantly reacted by tightening his grip once more to pick off the flower.

At that moment, the flowerbud finally reacted and slightly trembled for a few moments before suddenly shrinking back from the water and disappearing without a trace.

Plop. Cultivator Jian hadn't released his grip, and was dragged into the pond when the flower stalk shrank with immense strength, resulting in a splash of milky-white water.

As Fairy Shi was relatively nearby, a few droplets landed on her face. She immediately let out a miserable shriek.

“It’s poisonous! The water is poisonous!” The female cultivator covered her face with her hands and shouted in furious alarm. She then hastily took out a red medicine bottle from her storage pouch and flusteredly threw the fire-red medicine pill it contained into her mouth.

In the split second between taking out the medicine pill and swallowing it, Hu Yue and Jin Qing saw her face decay with yellow blisters all over, causing their breaths to turn ice-cold.

Even Han Li’s expression changed upon seeing this.

If just a few drops caused Fairy Shi’s face to become like this, then what about cultivator Jian who fell into the water?

With that thought, they turned their gazes towards the milky-white pond.

Ever since he had fallen into the pond, there had been no other disturbance, no miserable screams or desperate calls for help. Fear began to blossom in their hearts.

At that moment, Shi Die finally stopped groaning and tore off a corner of her robe and tightly wound it around her face. With a light sigh, she looked at the water with a gaze of bitter resentment.

Pop. Pop. A series of bubbles popped on the surface of the pond. Soon after, a completely decayed corpse floated to the surface.

Everyone's face had turned green. From the clothes on the corpse, it was obviously cultivator Jian.

In just a few moments, he had turned into a wet skeleton with empty eye sockets. Upon seeing that his eyes had turned into empty sockets, they felt chill down their spines.

“How did this happen? Was thousand year stone milk supposed to be this poisonous?” Hu Yue muttered to himself with disbelief.

“Thousand year stone milk isn't poisonous. But it may as well be if poison was placed within it.” Han Li stood and slowly said with a light breath.

“Fellow Daoist Han! Could it be that your shout to stop was because you knew the water was poisonous?” Shi Die icily asked with a slightly hoarse voice.

“I didn't know whether or not it was poisonous. However, I did find out that the Sevenflow Lotus isn't something that should be plucked. Look at the right hand of that corpse!” Han Li calmly said, lightly tapping the skeleton with the tip of his foot.

Hu Yue and the others attentively examined the hand and revealed baffled expressions.

The bones of the right hand were partially black, and the forefinger's tip had been shattered. It was jagged, like it had been bitten off by something.

Seeing that nobody was doubting him, Han Li didn't bother further explaining and looked at the water with an icy gaze.

At the center of the white pond, the "Sevenshadow Lotus" had reemerged at an unknown time. It still released its beautiful glow, but now, Hu Yue and the others gazed at it as if it were a scorpion.

Han Li wordlessly opened his hand with five fireballs floating above his fingertips. With a flick of his fingers, the fireballs lined up in the form of a word and shot towards the Sevenshadow Lotus.

Jin Qing and the others were startled but didn't stop Han Li due to the previous occurrence.

The Sevenshadow Lotus swayed from the impact of the fireball's and suddenly withdrew from the pond. Something flew out of the water as a blur, shooting straight towards Han Li like an arrow.

Chapter 424: Demon Serpent

While everyone cried out in alarm upon seeing the shadow piercing toward him, Han Li raised his hand and tossed out his Green Brilliance Dagger he had prepared and struck the shadow.

The black shadow was pushed back to the pondside and hissed with an icy gaze.

Shockingly, the shadow turned out to be a meter long, jet-black serpent with a flesh horn.

A scarlet tongue hissed from its mouth, and it had a tri-colored flower bud on the top half of its flesh horn. It appeared rather ridiculous, as if a small flower were growing out of its head.

As for the rainbow radiance, it was a seven colored demon Qi that was formed from wisps coming out of the serpent's mouth.

It appeared exactly the same as a true rainbow so it was no surprise that it had deceived all of them.

After seeing the black shadow's true appearance, Hu Yue blankly stared at it, saying, "Crested Demon Serpent? It transformed the crest of its head into a Sevenshadow Lotus!"

After clearly seeing this serpent's true appearance, Shi Die's eyes coldly glinted, and she wordlessly raised her hand, releasing a purple folded scarf. This item released several explosive sounds as

it shot towards the demon serpent.

“Careful! This serpent is extremely venomous. You aren’t its match!” Jin Qing abruptly said this before releasing his large, white block stamp to join the scarf as a streak of white streak of light.

The demon serpent watched the two items attack it with an ice-cold gaze, and then opened it’s mouth and spouted out a bright rainbow pearl. The pearl released a gorgeous radiance that blocked the large stamp and purple scarf, forcing them to a complete stop.

At that moment, Hu Yue finally woke from his disappointment at the loss of the treasure. After a moment of hesitation, he threw out two flying knives and entered the battle.

Suddenly, three streaks of white light and a streak of purple brilliance were intertwined with the rainbow light.

The serpent was completely fearless! After a few strange croaks, it spouted out several colorful clouds. The clouds made the magic treasures dim until they were nearly dark immediately after they made contact.

“How can this fiend be so powerful? Could it be a mutated demon?” Jin Qing was aghast at the sight.

But as soon as he finished talking, a red radiance was fiercely shot out, piercing through the colorful cloud in an instant and

striking the demon serpent's flesh horn.

A thumb-sized bloody hole was left behind by the strike.

The demon released a strange shout and painfully slammed into the limestone floor. Soon after, its body coiled, and it shot towards the pond in a blur.

But at that moment, a group of emerald flying swords flew down from above, nailing the serpent's head to the limestone floor faster than lightning. The serpent then flusteredly thrashed around but wasn't able to move away in the slightest.

This was the result of the sudden actions by Han Li and Crooked Soul.

In addition to Crooked Soul's use of a Blood Spirit Drill, Han Li used the Bamboo Cloudswarm Swords to hold it down. He had made sure to restrain his swords' divine devilbane lightning to prevent the others from realizing that his swords had been refined from Heaven Lightning Bamboo.

Jin Qing and the others felt relief when they saw Han Li had successfully restrained the demon serpent.

After some slight discussion, Shi Die and the others decided to put away their magic treasures once they were released by the rainbow demon pearl's pressure.

Afterwards, the party gathered around the demon serpent.

“This really is a Crested Demon Serpent, but it appears that someone grafted a Sevenglow Lotus’ likeness on it. It absolutely doesn’t have the capability to do such a thing innately.” Hu Yue revealed a puzzled expression as he watched the demon serpent struggling to free itself from the small swords.

“Obviously, this Sevenglow Lotus was some kind of ingenious trap. It is entirely possible that dead fellow over there had fallen for it; even we fell for it.” Jin Qing agreed with a bitter smile.

Han Li silently stood at the side as he examined the demon serpent before turning his gaze back to the right hand of the skeleton.

He couldn’t help but imagine someone excitedly attempting to pick the Sevenglow Lotus, as the demon serpent then flew out of the water and bit off his finger. Soon after, he was torn apart by the poison.

Han Li felt his heart coldly tremble as turned to look at the small arrow in the skeleton’s head. It had clearly been placed by someone who came later; whoever set this trap was truly quite the schemer.

Slice. The Crested Demon Serpent’s head was separated from its body with a cold flash of light. Shi Die coldly glanced at it from the side with a dagger in her hand.

Han Li slightly frowned.

Han Li knew that she detested this serpent because it had ruined her face, it was said that a woman's appearance was just as precious as her own life. Even if the Crested Demon Serpent wasn't the main culprit behind her ruined face, it was definitely one of the main causes.

Han Li lightly shook his head and raised his hand, returning his small swords back into his body.

Afterwards, his gaze fell back down to the arrow in the skeleton.

This arrow appeared to be the same emerald-green as Han Li's own Bamboo Cloudswarm Swords at first glance, but further inspection proved otherwise.

Han Li's flying swords were bright and shining while the arrow faintly carried a dark Qi, as if it had been tainted or refined with evil arts.

"Fellow Daoist Han, will we go and explore any other areas? Perhaps we will discover something." Having seen Han Li continue to study the skeleton, Hu Yue couldn't help but ask this. It seemed he truly didn't want to go back empty handed!

"Please don't hesitate to continue exploring, Crooked Soul and I will remain in the main hall." Han Li said with a calm expression.

Hu Yue revealed slight surprise. After looking at the bones along with the emerald-green arrow, he revealed slight hesitation and ultimately didn't move.

When Jin Qing and Shi Die saw this, they also silently stayed in the main hall.

After all, who knows what other dangers lay in wait in the cave residence, given the initial encounter? It was obviously safer to stay together.

Furthermore, they were able to guess that the arrow was unordinary. Why else would the mysterious Han Li continue to unceasingly examine it?

“Fellow Daoist Han, would you say that rather than being an ancient cultivator ruin, this place was actually an elaborate trap?” Jin Qing suddenly asked in a low voice.

“Impossible, this place is definitely an ancient cultivator ruin. Otherwise, wouldn't it be too much of a coincidence that you found this place from the pearls? However, this place had already been discovered by someone else, and they had long placed down traps inside.” Han Li shook his head.

“If what you say is true, then are there no treasures left here?” Shi Die spoke with an icy voice.

Han Li revealed an expression of slight regret, but remained

silent in tacit approval.

Jin Qing and Hu Yue then looked at each other with changed expressions.

Hu Yue's face was more notable between the two. Not only did this trip end with no benefits, but of the two that he had invited, one had met an untimely end while the other had their face ruined. This treasure hunt ended up being a complete disaster!

During their moment of absolute silence, the pond released a faint groan.

The cultivators hurriedly turned their gaze towards the pond in alarm.

Cultivator Jian's body, who should've already been dead for quite some time, slowly climbed out of the pond and let out an occasional groan from his skeleton mouth.

At that moment, the cultivators were dumbstruck and were looking at each other in dismay.

Since they were cultivators, it wasn't particularly frightening for a malicious spirit or other evil entity to appear. They could just make short work of them. However, this was the body of a companion that had entered the cave with them not long ago. Could it be that he had a secret technique that allowed his primal soul to persist after his body was destroyed?

As it was unclear whether the corpse was currently possessed by its owner or a ghost, Hu Yue and the others were hesitant to act.

The corpse of cultivator Jian still continued to slowly climb out of the pond and approach them.

Hu Yue saw that something was amiss and hastily yelled, “Regardless of whether you are man or ghost, don’t come any closer or else our hands will be forced!” He flung out his sleeves, throwing his flying daggers out to revolve around its body.

Jin Qing and Shi Die were also vigilant and rigidly stared at the corpse.

Just as Hu Yue finished speaking, cultivator Jian’s body stopped and remained motionless. Hu Yue and the others involuntarily let out a sigh of relief in response.

But as Han Li detachedly watched on, he felt that something was very wrong and instinctively took out an item with a flip of his hand.

In the very next moment, a sudden and abrupt change occurred.

Cultivator Jian’s body suddenly kicked off the ground and fiercely pounced towards the group.

Hu Yue and Jin Qing's expressions paled, and they instantly released their magic treasures. The two streaks of white radiance and the streak of white light struck cultivator Jian and cleanly destroyed the skeleton with a single blow.

But suddenly, Hu Yue felt a light wind gently blowing past him. With a chill running down his back, he turned his head to see a skeleton hand emerging from his abdomen, tightly grasping a bean-sized, sparkling blue core in its fingers.

Chapter 425: Congealed Yang Birds

Eyes wide in disbelief, Hu Yue stared at the skeletal hand protruding from his abdomen.

With an audible crack, the blue core was crushed into a fine powder, which trickled from the hand.

Hu Yue let out a muffled groan and weakly fell to the floor after the skeletal hand withdrew from his body. The hole left behind bled profusely, quickly filling the hall with a bloody stench.

Although he was somehow still alive for the time being, he was clearly on death's door.

The sound of Jin Qing's and Shi Die's cries of alarm along with the sound of his magic treasure shattering rang in Hu Yue's mind as all of his life experiences flashed through his mind.

His impoverished life during childhood and the joy his entire family revealed upon discovering his spiritual roots; the moment of helplessness he felt when the Senior Martial Sister he admired married someone else; his ecstasy at successful Core Formation, and his wholehearted grand ambition of one day forming a Nascent Soul; as all these memories flowed through his mind, his limbs gradually grew colder and more distant...

But he was not resigned to dying!

He had refined a set of three flying daggers as his magic treasure. Ordinarily, he would only attack with two of them and would leave the third behind in his body.

This was because the third flying dagger had been refined using a secret technique. Although its attack power was average, it could automatically protect his body with far greater awareness than common magic techniques.

Moreover, he had spared no cost or effort when refining this treasure and it had just recently entered the sentient stage.

Even if he didn't give a command, the treasure should've responded to the killing intent and automatically protected his body against the surprise attack!

'Unless, the attacker...' Hu Yue finally thought of something, using the last of his mortal strength to turn his head with slight reluctance and view everything that was happening behind him.

At that moment, a white blur was closely chasing after Jin Qing. Jin Qing continuously evaded it while engulfed by a silver radiance. He had released his own magic treasure and was ceaselessly bombarding the white blur with attacks as if he were greatly fearful of it.

As for Han Li and the others, they were trapped within a large expanse of black Qi. The fiery scroll painting in hand, Han Li shot countless fist sized flames from it, creating a huge ring of fire around them that continuously attacked the black Qi, keeping it at

bay.

Shi Die and Crooked Soul closely stood behind Han Li.

Crooked Soul's body was enveloped in blood light, and he continuously released purple flames from his hands, striking any black Qi that leaked past the ring of fire. At his side, Shi Die was grasping a white bead that radiated with light, preventing any of the black Qi that slipped past both abilities from approaching. Even then, she still revealed an expression of fear.

Hu Yue didn't pay any attention to the black Qi and strenuously examined the white blur chasing after Jin Qing.

Sure enough, the white skeleton of the long dead cultivator was now surrounded in white fog and was pursuing Jin Qing with great speed. At this point, it couldn't possibly be considered dead in the least.

Hu Yue smiled sadly.

He, a core formation cultivator, had met his end by a skeleton. What a ridiculous affair.

While Hu Yue was still mocking himself, he faded into eternal rest with a derisive smirk still at the corner of his mouth.

As Hu Yue breathed his last, Han Li continuously surveyed the situation with a sullen expression.

During the same moment that Hu Yue had fallen prey to the white skeleton, the nearby walls had suddenly released a wide expanse of cold-yin ghost fog, trapping them all at once.

Fortunately, Han Li had made slight preparations and had opened the painting scroll without hesitation, releasing countless flaming spirit birds from within.

These demonfire enveloped swallows were “Congealed Yang Birds”. Han Li had previously read a detailed introduction of them in an ancient record.

They were born from fire essence and particularly loved to consume Yin ghosts and malicious souls, earning a reputation of being the bane of Yin. However, this bird had long been extinct, and the scroll painting had only sealed a fraction of the spirit bird’s soul. As a result, it could only release avatars of the “Congealed Yang Birds”.

While these avatars appeared exactly the same as actual Congealed Yang Birds, their strength was incomparable to the original. Else, this black ghost fog would’ve been cleanly devoured rather than just being temporarily scattered.

Although Han Li was completely tangled up by this ghost fog, he wasn’t particularly worried. Both his Bamboo Cloudswarm Swords and his Gold Devouring Beetles could easily make short work of it.

What made him uneasy was the ghost mist’s master, who still

had yet to reveal himself. As for the skeleton, it was clear at a glance that it wasn't intelligent in the least; it was being controlled by someone else. However, the skeleton was quite strange. Since it was completely unscathed from the repeated pummeling of Jin Qing's magic treasure, there must be some mystery behind it.

As Han Li thought this, ghostly wails suddenly broke out from around him.

This blood chilling voice was deafeningly sharp and belonged to neither man nor woman. Those who heard it would have their minds bewildered and both their blood and Qi in disarray.

Han Li's heart trembled, and he reflexively spread out his spiritual sense to envelope the entire hall. At that same moment, he flicked his finger and sent out two small emerald swords from his body which began to slowly revolve around him.

Upon hearing the ghostly wail, Jin Qing appeared distraught from fear and furiously exclaimed, "What demon wishes to mystify himself and remains hidden?" Although his voice wasn't loud, it resonated throughout the room. Unexpectedly, the ghostly wails stopped in response.

In addition, the next strike of his magic treasure completely shattered the skeleton.

Jin Qing was pleasantly surprised by the strange turn of events.

At that same time, the ghost mist closely surrounding Han Li and company quickly withdrew back into the walls around them.

Han Li was greatly surprised; he didn't believe that Jin Qing's furious roar had contained such power.

In the very next moment, Shi Die turned around and took this opportunity to madly rush towards the stairs. In the blink of an eye, she was already climbing up to the surface.

Han Li was expressionless upon seeing this, but Jin Qing was brimming with fury.

This woman would flee in the middle of battle? Although her magic power was lacking, the magic treasure pearl in her possession was clearly capable of restraining the ghost mist. Naturally, he couldn't just let her run off! With that thought in mind, Jin Qing instantly opened his mouth to stop her.

But at that moment, another anomaly occurred!

Just as Shi Die reached the second step, the stone wall next to her suddenly flashed with green light. A terrifying, ten-fingered ghost claw rushed out without warning and pierced through her abdomen at a speed that almost couldn't be seen.

Shi Die wretchedly screamed and did her utmost to brighten the pearl's light in an attempt to escape.

However, the ghost hand didn't fear the pearl in the slightest and emitted a black Qi instead, surrounding Shi Die with it in a mere moment.

The woman's screams came to an abrupt stop. Once the black Qi withdrew, all that was left was a dried up corpse that was then thrown before Han Li and Crooked Soul.

After Han Li turned his head to look at the fleshless corpse, his face turned slightly green.

Jin Qing's face had long turned pale, but he was now nervously glancing around with his white block stamp magic treasure in hand.

“Hehe! I need one more suitable corpse. Which of you three will sacrifice yourself as tribute?” An icy voice echoed throughout the hall with a tone of disdain.

Han Li's eyes coldly glinted, and he spread out the scroll painting once more. With the entire nest of fire birds returned to the scroll painting, Han Li formed a dual handed incantation gesture with a solemn expression.

Woosh. A three-meter-wide Congealed Yang Bird flew out of the scroll painting while surrounded in brilliant flames. After flying once around Han Li's head, it shot towards one of the hall's stone pillars with wings spread wide.

BANG.

When the huge bird rammed into the stone pillar, it flashed with green light, and an eerie snake made from black Qi flew out and tangled with the fire bird.

With the bird spouting out broiling white essence fire and the eerie snake spraying ink-black cold Qi, a huge battle unfolded between them in the hall.

“Tch, tch! I didn’t expect there to be someone capable of utilizing the long extinct spirit controlling techniques. It seems I’ve underestimated you.” After this was said, a freakish shadow slowly walked out of the stone pillar.

Han Li and Jin Qing both gazed at it with rapt attention.

Not only was the silhouette dark green, but it was also surrounded in sparkling green light, masking its true appearance. His body appeared to be wrapped with arm-thick bands of black fog, and his eyes were as scarlet as fresh blood.

After the freakish shadow swept his gaze past the three, Han Li and Jin Qing felt a chill run down their backs as if their minds and hearts had been laid bare. They couldn’t help but glance at each other before looking back at the shadow with horror.

The enemy had used only his gaze to exert such great pressure onto them. This clearly showed that this person’s cultivation far

exceeded their own. Could this person be a Nascent Soul cultivator?

From the appearance of this freakish shadow, it seemed to resemble a ghost or demon more than a living person.

But if it really were a malicious spirit, then how had it preserved the entirety of its intelligence?

Chapter 426: Treachery

Jin Qing suppressed his fear and forced himself to ask, “Is your esteemed self man or ghost?”

The freakish shadow sinisterly smiled and teased, “Man? Ghost? You tell me!”

Jin Qing’s expression became extremely unsightly.

Han Li remained silent and quickly opened his scroll painting without warning.

Countless fire birds rushed out, flocking straight towards the freakish shadow. At the same moment, the previously summoned huge bird released a sharp cry and abandoned its fight with the eerie snake, shooting straight towards the freakish shadow as a scorching ball of white flame.

The freakish shadow snorted disdainfully and said, “Congealed Yang Birds? If they had their genuine bodies, this Senior might be slightly fearful. But to dare attempt to devour ghosts and exterminate devils with only their remnant souls?”

Having said that, the green shadow raised its hands and condensed black Qi around them in an instant.

Pu, pu. The black Qi transformed into two, horned ink pythons which shot towards the large flock of fire birds. With their

bloodthirsty mouths wide open, each python swallowed several fire birds. Immediately after, they each burped a wisp of white smoke and were completely unharmed.

At that moment, the huge Congealed Yang Bird that had turned into a ball of white flame arrived in front of the snakes. However, it completely ignored them and shot straight towards the freakish shadow.

When the shadow saw this, its eyes flashed with red light, enriching their color. Although the shadow didn't move, it faintly revealed a solemn expression. It was clear that the remnant souls of the Congealed Yang Bird wasn't nearly as harmless as it had made them out to be.

Peng. The green shadow's hands trembled, separating the horned pythons from its hands and allowing them to move on their own.

Then, while clenching its hands as hard as it could, otherworldly dark-green flames flourished from its grasp. Soon after, its body blurred and met the white fire sphere with a fierce punch.

As Han Li and Jin Qing watched on with shock, the white ball of flame was scattered by the strike and disappeared in an instant. A white crystal pearl suddenly appeared in the the green shadow's grasp.

The shadow evilly grinned and swallowed it without hesitation, before turning its ice-cold gaze back to Han Li once more.

At that moment, the scroll painting in Han Li's grasp set itself aflame, and he hurriedly tossed it away. It turned into ash in the blink of an eye. Once the scroll painting turned to ash, the fire birds that were still tangling with the ink snakes disappeared as well.

Han Li sucked in a deep breath.

Although he knew that the remnant souls of the Congealed Yang Birds weren't the green shadow's match, he didn't anticipate that a treasure that specialized in subduing Yin ghosts would be blown away with a single blow. He had only sent them out to probe the opponent's strength, and ended up not acquiring the slightest detail.

The only thing he was certain of was that the opponent wasn't a mere ghost or demon!

Remaining calm, Han Li attentively gazed at the green shadow and inwardly assessed how great his odds of victory were if they were to fight.

"Not bad! I'm now very interested in your body. As for you two, get lost!" The green shadow slowly spoke while looking at Han Li. It seemed his last attack had provoked it.

Naturally, Crooked Soul didn't move in the slightest, but when Jin Qing heard this, he grew distracted, and his expression incessantly changed.

Although he hadn't personally engaged it yet, his opponent's strength was deep and immeasurable. Even if he were to join hands with Han Li, Jin Qing reckoned that their odds of victory weren't very high.

Now that the freakish shadow told him to leave, Jin Qing's heart was wavering.

Having personally witnessed so many cultivators meet their tragic end on this very day, Jin Qing, who normally bragged about being guilt-free and clear-hearted, felt for the first time a desire to cherish life and live another day.

The green shadow snorted and swept its gaze past Jin Qing and Crooked Soul. It sinisterly said, "What? I give you two a chance for survival, and you two do not wish to take it? This Senior should've just saved himself the trouble and turned you two into corpses from the start!"

Having heard the freakish shadow's words brimming with killing intent, Jin Qing's face changed between red and white several times before eventually cupping his fist to Han Li and shamefully saying, "Brother Han, I do not wish to die here. I will have to let you down."

Afterwards, he said no more and rushed toward the stone steps without looking back!

Han Li's expression was calm and didn't reveal any emotions of anger or disappointment. He merely gazed at Jin Qing as he

departed with a faint, cold glare.

The green shadow's red eyes revealed a trace of satisfaction.

Just as Jin Qing rushed past the shattered skeleton, an alarming change occurred.

The nearby fragments of the skeleton suddenly launched towards him like a barrage of arrows.

With furious alarm, Jin Qing surrounded himself in a layer of silver light in a flash. But without waiting for him to release his magic treasure or question the freakish shadow, the bone shards shined with white radiance and shot through his silver barrier as if it weren't even there.

An instant later, Jin Qing's body was utterly shredded and fell to the floor without uttering a single word.

Han Li expressionlessly looked at the corpse on the floor and lightly shook his head.

With a flip of his hand, a spirit beast pouch appeared in his hand. Simultaneously, his two flying swords in front of him trembled and faintly released a green radiance.

"Interesting! How come you aren't asking me why I didn't keep my promise?" the green shadow asked with a sneer.

“If your esteemed self doesn’t wish to talk, then there is no need to take the initiative to ask. I’d just be wasting my breath.” Han Li expressionlessly said.

“Not bad! Youngster, you are quite to my liking. If this were before I met great catastrophe, I might’ve taken you in as my disciple. But now, I will never take another disciple. I will be repaying my treacherous disciples by turning their bones to ash and refining their souls!” The green shadow was slightly surprised at Han Li’s response, but soon its voice once again grew icy.

Without a change of expression, Han Li waved his arm. Crooked Soul then walked to Han Li’s side with his body enveloped in blood light.

He didn’t plan on spouting rubbish, instead preparing to use a thunderous strike to defeat the enemy in a single blow. At the same time, additional blades of his Bamboo Cloudswarm Swords from within his body readied themselves to pounce with fervor.

After seeing Crooked Soul’s blood light, the shadow slightly trembled, and it smiled in great anger. “Divine Blood Light! Good, good! Are you disciples of Zenith Yin or Zenith Brilliance?”

Han Li slightly frowned.

“Zenith Yin? Could you talking about Grandmaster Zenith Yin of Zenith Yin Island?” Han Li indifferently asked. He faintly felt as if he could unravel the mystery behind the Black Fiend School and

Zenith Yin Island.

Upon hearing Han Li, the green shadow flew into a rage and loudly shouted, “Grandmaster Zenith Yin? Could it be that traitorous disciple dares to call himself grandmaster?”

Han Li was slightly stunned. This ghost was actually the master of Grandmaster Zenith Yin. How truly bizarre!

Just as Han Li was left flabbergasted by those words, a green light flashed from his body and a muffled noise came from behind him.

Han Li couldn’t help but turn around with alarm. However, there was absolutely nothing behind him.

“Not good!” In nearly an instant, Han Li understood that he had been tricked and hastily turned his head back, instinctively releasing seven flying swords to protect him.

As of current, controlling nine of his Bamboo Cloudswarm Swords was Han Li’s absolute limit.

During the instant he turned his head over, his nine flying swords released a single streak of swordlight. A faint golden arc of Divine Devilbane Lightning struck from the swordlight, rendering the incoming green ball of light nonexistent .

Han Li was drenched in cold sweat, as he had nearly just fallen to the enemy.

“Gold Lightning Bamboo! You refined your flying swords from Gold Lightning Bamboo!” At that moment, the green shadow spoke with incredulousness.

Han Li sneered and thought to mock the shadow, but he suddenly felt a strange fluctuation from up above him.

He leaned to the side out of reflex, but he still felt his chest tremble. An extremely familiar red radiance had pierced through him with chilling cold, creating a wound that bled profusely. Immediately after, a yellow streak of light fiercely struck at him.

Dang. A clear ring sounded out. Several of his flying swords flew out to block the yellow streak, the Immemorial Bowl.

“Crooked Soul!” Han Li shouted to his side in furious alarm. The Blood Spirit Drill and the fierce attack from the Immemorial Bowl were clearly Crooked Soul’s doing.

However, the figure at his side blurred, shooting towards the green shadow as if he hadn’t heard him.

Han Li reached out for the connection in his mind. Although his spiritual sense was still present in Crooked Soul, for some unknown reason he had completely lost control of him.

The green shadow howled with laughter and flew towards Crooked Soul as a streak of green light.

Han Li's face grew extremely pale. Then with clenched teeth, he suddenly formed an incantation gesture and fiercely uttered, "Receive". From a distance, a small green ball flew from the crown of Crooked Soul's head and hastily shot into Han Li's body before disappearing without a trace.

At that moment, the green shadow had already entered Crooked Soul.

As Han Li pushed down on the wound in his chest, he was fiercely staring at Crooked Soul.

Crooked Soul then slowly opened his eyes to reveal a pair of glowing blood-scarlet eyes.

Chapter 427: Profound Soul Demonification

Han Li quickly took out a blue talisman from his storage pouch and gently slapped it onto his wound. With a flash of white light, the bleeding immediately stopped.

But when he turned his head back to meet Crooked Soul's icy gaze, Han Li wordlessly emitted an azure light around his body, which reached ten meters in height, and had his emerald swords revolve around him in streaks. It all appeared blindingly bright.

Han Li had already made a firm resolution that if he were going to leave this place, he needed to have these Bamboo Cloudswarm Swords outside his body to protect against any tricks this ancient eccentric may have in store.

To tell the truth, this was the most fearsome, menacing enemy he had encountered since entering the cultivation world. If his reactions were the slightest bit slow, he would've already had a hole through his heart. Were his spiritual sense not stronger and his mind not nimbler than a common cultivators, he would've undoubtedly met certain death from Crooked Soul's recent ambush.

The Blood Spirit Drill was truly vicious and sinister. It could hardly be blocked.

But now, Han Li didn't have to worry about any further attacks from the Blood Spirit Drill. That last attack was the last charge that Crooked Soul had cultivated.

However, Han Li still felt incredibly gloomy.

According to the External Reincarnation Technique, he clearly should have refined his spiritual sense fragment and Crooked Soul's physical body into one. Just how had this old ghost been able to take control of Crooked Soul without his knowledge?

He wasn't even given the slightest warning. Were it not for his quick wits in hastily retrieving his divided consciousness from Crooked Soul, he feared the shadow would've already used it as a method for consuming him.

Han Li now found himself in a truly troublesome situation.

Since the enemy had possessed Crooked Soul, then the green shadow must be deceased and was closer to an evil demonic spirit or primal soul. The shadow possessing Crooked Soul wasn't necessarily a bad thing, and it may have quite possibly given Han Li the opportunity to exterminate him.

With that thought, Han Li flipped his hand and an exquisitely-crafted small brass bell appeared in his hand: the Spirit Guiding Bell he had kept stored away for so long.

This bell contained the blood essence of Crooked Soul's physical body. Although he couldn't count on it to arrest the enemy, it could still be used to create an advantageous opportunity!

At that moment, “Crooked Soul” was stretching and moving his body as if wanting to familiarize himself with it.

Having seen Han Li’s action, he eerily chuckled as if the result of the coming battle were laid in stone.

Han Li’s expression darkened, and he no longer hesitated to ring the small bell.

With a series of clear bell rings, Crooked Soul’s red eyes flickered, but no other change occurred from his body as if nothing was wrong.

Han Li’s heart sunk.

“Regardless of what tricks you perform on this Fiend Core Avatar, since I’ve become the master of this body, do you believe that minor restriction will have an effect on me?” Crooked Soul’s rough voice slowly spoke with a mocking tone.

“You know that it is a Fiend Core Avatar?” Han Li’s heart stirred with surprise.

“Hehe! The Fiend Core and External Reincarnation techniques were something I had originally passed down to my two traitorous disciples. Did you believe I wouldn’t see through them? You sure are courageous to use them in front of me! Could it be that your master didn’t warn you that so long as this secret technique was used to refine an avatar, that I would be able to easily control it?”

Crooked Soul twisted his neck left and right and indifferently said with crossed arms.

Han Li was bewildered, but his face wore a strange expression.

“What master? The avatar creation technique was something I acquired from a jade talisman. Could it have some relation to you?” Han Li asked, unwilling to be a scapegoat for Grandmaster Zenith Yin. Regardless of whether his words were true or false, Han Li still gave a dull explanation.

“Jade slip? Youngster, did you believe that by not admitting to be the apprentice of my two traitorous disciples that I would let you go? After I capture you, I will refine your soul and acquire everything that I want to know.” Crooked Soul didn’t seem to believe Han Li and spoke expressionlessly.

With that said, he beckoned to the skeleton pile nearby without further hesitation, causing it to float in the air. In an instant, it reassembled into a complete skeleton, and flew towards Crooked Soul with a flash of white light.

Although Han Li didn’t know what he intended, he wasn’t going to allow his opponent to smoothly succeed.

He immediately flicked his finger three times, shooting out three streaks of azure swordlight from his hand. The Azure Essence Swordstreaks shot straight towards the skeleton.

“You dare to so presumptuously release those granules of light?” Crooked Soul sinisterly said. He then opened his mouth and spouted out a beam of blood light.

With a series of explosions, the blood light and the azure light struck and scattered into radiance.

Han Li frowned and wore a solemn expression. After being possessed, Crooked Soul’s cultivation was no longer restricted to early Core Formation stage. How truly odd!

But what happened next left Han Li even more aghast!

Once the white skeleton flew in front of Crooked Soul, it merged into his body without the slightest obstruction.

Crooked Soul then loudly roared with his head facing upwards. His body emitted several different flashes of colors: from dark-green otherworldly flame, pitch-black ghost mist, and Crooked Soul’s Divine Blood Light. These three distinct radiances tangled with one another, continuously wandering throughout Crooked Soul’s body and fully covering him within it.

As Crooked Soul roared, a small explosion could be heard from within his body. With his body bowed in pain, his limbs and body began to slowly shrink.

Once this was done, he stood up appearing much shorter, exactly like an ordinary person.

But what caused Han Li to be most shocked was Crooked Soul's face had changed to that of a youth's with delicate facial features. Even the flourishing blood-red in his eyes had greatly dimmed. In that instant, Crooked Soul had undergone a transformation into a completely different person.

Han Li was stupefied for a moment before revealing a bitter smile.

Han Li originally wished to use this opportunity to strike his opponent given how audaciously he used magic in front of him, but he didn't expect that this technique would be performed so quickly that there wasn't an opportunity to make use of.

After a moment of silence, Han Li dryly asked the youth a bizarre question, "Is this possession? Or complete body seizure?"

The delicate youth mysteriously smiled and glanced at Han Li with narrowed eyes, serenely saying, "You greatly underestimate my Profound Soul Demonification Technique. It is a secret art that only a Nascent Soul cultivator is capable of performing. So long as it is cultivated, there are no restrictions with body seizure, and profound souls may be added to another body as one wishes. Now that my profound soul has solidified its bones, I will have you be a blood sacrifice so that this Divine Ancestor may rise once again!"

He raised his hands, suddenly turning his fingers into incisive claws with dark green fingernails several inches long.

Han Li's expression darkened, and he didn't further waste his breath. He tossed out the spirit beast pouch that he had been holding since the beginning and released his several thousands of Gold Devouring Beetles. A short moment later, a glowing cloud of gold and silver floated above his head.

Then with a wave of his arms, white lights continuously flickered around him, surrounding Han Li with forty huge ape puppets. Each of them stared at the youth with an icy gaze.

But Han Li didn't stop there. With his two hands forming an incantation seal, his nine small swords flew out as azure light and converged into a three-meter-long emerald sword. The sword streak endlessly twinkled with faint golden arcs of light continuously sparking from it.

Upon seeing this, the delicate youth's expression greatly changed, revealing surprise and a grave expression.

After the youth's gaze flickered several times, he suddenly said, "Flying swords refined from Heaven Lightning Bamboo, insect control techniques, and puppets! It seems you really aren't the disciple of Zenith Yin and Zenith Brilliance. Since this is the case, then how about we have a proper chat?"

Han Li, who had just prepared his entire offensive, was stunned upon hearing this. But after a moment of silence, he coldly said, "Unfortunately, I really want to test whether or not your esteemed self is capable of receiving my flying swords!"

Without the slightest hesitation, Han Li pointed towards his huge flying sword, and it immediately launched towards the youth in a green streak of light as thick as a python. As it flew, it occasionally rolled with sounds of thunder.

The youth's face slightly sank upon seeing this, and he lightly waved his claws in front of him. Five crescents of black radiance appeared out of the air and rapidly expanded, blurring several times before quickly chopping towards the green sword streak.

Upon contact, the green sword streak sparked with faint golden arcs of lightning, completely obliterating the crescents of black radiance. They weren't able to withstand even a single blow!

Although the youth's expression remained calm, his mind was greatly startled. The power of the Gold Lightning Bamboo was far greater than he had anticipated.

In the blink of an eye, the green sword streak had arrived in front of the youth. However, he was still calm and collected as he indifferently watched the huge sword approach him as if he still had something up his sleeve.

Chapter 428: Xiao Cha

The youth swiped his ghost claw again but this time with a flash of green radiance, shooting a green streak of light towards the incoming sword streak. It immediately resulted in a huge clap of thunder.

Black and golden arcs of lightning bursted out, intertwining to eventually form a huge sphere of lightning. With neither attack giving way, their cries of thunder reverberated through the hall with astonishing pressure.

Han Li suddenly narrowed his gaze.

“Heaven Lightning Bamboo!” He was alarmed to find the opponent also possessed a magic treasure refined from Heaven Lightning Bamboo!

Could it be...?

Han Li thought of something and attentively examined the green streak that the youth released.

At the brilliant center of the arcs of lightning, he saw a foot-long emerald arrow struggling fiercely against his huge sword made from combining nine Bamboo Cloudswarm Swords.

The lightning it shot out was much different than that of his sword. Instead of a golden color, it was instead mixed with a deep

black as if it had been refined by an evil technique.

Although this was the case, the black lightning was exceedingly powerful and even took the upper hand in its clash against the gold lightning.

Han Li couldn't help but let out a gloomy sigh. He didn't expect that his original doubts were accurate.

He had felt a familiar aura upon seeing the arrow embedded in the skeleton's skull. It was quite similar to his own Gold Lightning Bamboo, but it occasionally released a faint, black evil Qi, arousing his doubts.

After all, according to what he knew, the Gold Lightning Bamboo had only appeared once in the Scattered Star Seas, but it soon disappeared after an unknown number of years. How would chance have it that he would end up encountering it? He had found it incredulous. But now, not only was this misleading arrow refined from Gold Lightning Bamboo, but it was also a magic treasure that was refined by the old ghost. What an amazing farce!

Han Li couldn't help but reveal a faint, sarcastic smile.

But he suddenly recalled something. Had the old ghost taken advantage of when he was examining the skeleton and controlled the arrow, he would've certainly died.

With that in mind, he couldn't help but feel increasingly fearful.

His back was covered in cold sweat from that lingering fear.

It wasn't exactly a surprise that his Bamboo Cloudswarm Swords couldn't beat the arrow. He had tempered his flying swords for far too little time, and he was only capable of relying on the innate ability of the Gold Lightning Bamboo in a fight. It was only natural for it to be inferior to the enemy's magic treasure. Had his nine flying swords been tempered for a slightly longer time, the enemy's trifling single magic treasure wouldn't be able to contend with it, regardless of whether or not it had also been refined from Gold Lightning Bamboo.

But now that he found out that the opponent had a method of restraining the Divine Devilbane Lightning of his flying swords, Han Li was unwilling to launch a full scale attack. After all, the green shadow's true cultivation had not been clearly shown from the very start, even after he had transformed into a youth.

In addition, given his adversary's cunning and resourcefulness, his opponent's evil magics and devilish arts would surely be even more weird and troublesome. He doubted if he could do much to stop them. If he were to put his all into the fight, even by giving his hundred thousand Gold Devouring Swarm the kill command, his victory still wouldn't be certain.

It could be assumed that since the enemy had suddenly put forward a proposal a moment ago that he was also somewhat fearful of Han Li's own magic treasure and strange techniques.

With that thought in mind, Han Li wordlessly beckoned toward his huge sword. With a huge explosion, the huge sword dissolved

into the original nine swords and shot back towards Han Li.

When the youth saw this, a cold glint flashed through his eyes. Then after some hesitation, he decided to not continue his attack and recalled his magic treasures.

After Han Li recalled his flying swords, he indifferently asked as if uncertain, “If your esteemed self truly is Grandmaster Zenith Yin’s master, then you must be over a thousand years old.”

The youth lowered his head to look at his restored hands and indifferently said, “Before I cultivated the Profound Soul Demonification Technique, I was over six hundred years old. Although I don’t know exactly how much time has passed after I transformed my body into a profound soul, it should be no less than four hundred years! Fortunately, I cultivated this profound soul body after scattering my Nascent Soul. Had I remained in my flesh body, I fear I would have long died in meditation.”

Han Li remained silent. If what he said was true, this person was a “Thousand Year Ghost”!

Han Li couldn’t help but be interested in this Profound Soul Demonification Technique, which allowed one to break through the limitations of one’s lifespan. As such, Han Li slowly said, “Since you say this, then I must truly address you as Senior!”

When the youth heard this, he glimpsed at Han Li and found that Han Li’s words were not to his liking. He sneered and said, “Senior? After so many years of being cursed and lauded in the

cultivation world, I didn't expect to remain as a bodiless ghost and renounce my opportunity to enter the cycle of reincarnation, all in order to take revenge on my two traitorous disciples. If you do not clearly explain your origins, then I will greatly damage my own Origin Qi to ensure you do not leave here alive." Although his voice was exceptionally calm, his words were heavy and chilling, leaving no room for doubt.

Han Li bitterly smiled. After some doubt, he said, "Wouldn't it be too much of a loss for this Junior if only Senior got to ask the questions? Could Senior also clear up a few of this one's doubts?"

The youth was stunned for a moment before roaring with laughter.

"Good, very good! I can agree to these conditions. But if you know too much, your life will be difficult to preserve." The youth made a grand display of arrogance!

"Hehe, Senior doesn't need to worry about that. If this one hasn't guessed incorrectly, then Senior's cultivation should be at late Core Formation at most. I'm honestly curious about whether or not I could endure." Han Li asked a probing question while carefully examining the youth's expression.

The youth coldly laughed several times, but he didn't reveal the slightest peculiarity, causing Han Li to inwardly curse, 'Sly old bastard'.

"Let's cut the rubbish. You said that you learned everything from

a jade slip, but not my two traitorous disciples. Give it to me.” The youth’s voice was harsh and cold, carrying an overbearing tone.

Han Li frowned. After some hesitation, he patted his storage pouch and flung a jade slip emitting grey Qi towards the youth.

The youth didn’t directly catch the jade slip. Instead, he raised his hand, summoning a black python of black Qi to catch it in its mouth and bring it before him.

Without moving his limbs, his eyes flashed with blood-red radiance, and he emotionlessly gazed into the jade slip.

A short moment later, he withdrew his peculiar gaze and lightly flicked his finger, shooting the jade slip back to Han Li with a woosh. He then slowly said to Han Li, “Tell me where you received this object. The jade slip doesn’t contain enough to disprove a relationship between you and my two traitorous disciples.

Han Li faintly smiled and didn’t answer, asking his own question instead, “Since Senior’s divine abilities are so great, then surely his reputation must’ve been equally great. Could Senior bestow his grand name to me?”

When Han Li avoided answering his question and asked his own, the youth was initially furious, and his appearance grew fierce. But soon after, he thought of something and coldly replied, “You should’ve heard of me before. The Bone Sage, Xiao Cha.”

‘The Bone Sage?’ Han Li couldn’t recall having heard that name.

However, he didn’t pay this any mind and calmly said, “Since Senior believes this jade slip is insufficient to prove my identity, then my cultivation art should be enough. Senior should’ve seen that my cultivation art is completely different than what he passed down. Please take another look.” Having said that, Han Li flourished his Azure Essence Sword Arts to its greatest extent and emitted a blinding azure light from his body.

Soon after, Han Li flicked his fingers and shot out eight azure essence sword streaks towards the walls, resulting in several bowl-thick holes.

“As for the origin of the jade slip, it is quite simple! Junior exterminated an evil cultivator and unexpectedly acquired it from his body. If Senior doesn’t believe this, then there is nothing else to say. We can only fight.” Han Li lightly patted his hands and spoke mildly.

Xiao Cha stared at Han Li’s azure light with an extremely gloomy expression. A long while later, his expression relaxed and he said, “Your cultivation art truly differs from my own Profound Yin Arts; it isn’t even a Devil Dao cultivation art. It is only natural for a Divine Ancestor such as I to see this. However, you have a Fiend Core Avatar and happened to come across this place. It is proper for this old man to be careful. Still, this old man has another question for you. Apart from the jade slip, what else did you acquire from that corpse?

Han Li’s expression stirred upon hearing this, and he faintly felt

as if this long period of intimidation was all for this final moment. With that thought, Han Li didn't answer and instead calmly asked, "Since Senior has cultivated a profound soul body but was trapped here for so many years, there must be many restrictions and flaws to the Profound Soul Demonification Technique. For example, there is no way to travel underneath sunlight, and you find yourself vulnerable to a particular type of magic tool..."

"Humph! Do you believe I will actually tell you this?" The youth couldn't help but grow furious and abruptly interrupt him.

Han Li calmly spoke with an indifferent expression, "Of course not! So does Senior really believe that Junior is going to tell him about something that Junior shouldn't know about?"

When Xiao Cha heard those cold, mocking words, he was shocked, and his furious expression gradually faded away.

Chapter 429: Ruined Map Reconstruction

“Since you are unwilling to answer, then how about...”

The Bone Sage changed the topic as if wanting to change his question, but at that moment, clear ringing suddenly came from the old devil’s body. The beautiful sounds left Han Li stunned.

When the Bone Sage heard this, he was startled but revealed an expression of joyful disbelief.

He no longer paid attention to Han Li and struck his own abdomen. With a tear, a white rib bone shot out from his body and flew once around him before landing in his palm.

The clear rings were coming from this rib bone.

Han Li blinked and revealed puzzlement. He was at a complete loss.

With the rib bone in his hand, the old devil’s smile grew even stronger.

Crush. The old devil exerted force into his grip and turned the bone to dust. A white sphere of light floated from the dust, revealing a black cricket. It croaked without end inside the light sphere, but once it saw the Bone Sage, it stopped chirping and left the light sphere before entering his body.

The Bone Sage broke into laughter and clutched the light sphere in his hand. The white light soon disappeared to reveal an embroidered cloth stained yellow from age.

When Han Li saw this item, he was shocked.

That embroidered cloth appeared rather familiar. Didn't it strongly resemble the same map fragment he acquired from the Black Fiend Sect Master? Could it be they had some relation to one another?

Han Li's mind stirred. He knew that this could be a clue to possibly unravel the mystery behind the map fragment. He couldn't help but observe his every movement with wide eyes.

Unfortunately, after taking a quick look at it, the Bone Sage quickly stuffed the embroidered cloth into his robe. He then calmly gazed at Han Li and said, "Since you have no relation to my two traitorous disciples, I don't have any time to waste on you. I have an important matter to attend to, so let us part ways. I will give you a word of advice before I leave. If you stay here for too long, my sinful disciple might take notice and will rush over here." With that said, the Bone Sage ignored any response Han Li might have had and turned into a streak of blood light with a sneer, hastily flying past Han Li towards the entrance.

Han Li was initially stunned but soon frowned. His body immediately turned into a blur of flourishing azure light, making a full circle around the main hall. After collecting his former comrade's storage pouches and magic treasures along with turning their corpses to ash, he hurriedly flew out of this place. It seemed

the old devil held no interest in the storage pouches of Core Formation cultivators. Although he didn't know whether he looked upon the belongings of Core Formation cultivators with disdain or was merely being negligent due to a pressing matter, it proved to be a very convenient situation for Han Li.

However, he couldn't help but think of the embroidered cloth. He was also afraid that if he was too slow in leaving, the Bone Sage might lay a trap at the exit which would prove greatly troublesome.

But when Han Li thought of how the Bone Sage had seized control of his avatar, Crooked Soul, Han Li felt a painful fire burning in his heart. However, from his opponent's attack, Han Li felt that his odds of success weren't high, causing him to feel helpless.

With that thought, Han Li flew to the surface.

That old devil had long disappeared without a trace, leaving Han Li in awe of his amazing movement technique.

But when Han Li saw that it was so peaceful and quiet all around him, he recalled how so many people had entered and only he managed to leave. He couldn't help but feel an indescribable sense of cold loneliness in his heart.

But as soon as those negative emotions appeared, they were thrown to the back of his mind. After all, the path of cultivation was long and arduous. Now was not the time to mourn.

Han Li didn't dare to stay for much longer. After getting his bearings, he immediately fled from the island and reached for his storage pouch.

After a short moment, an embroidered cloth appeared in his hand with a flash of white light.

As he looked at it, he felt his heart thump.

He didn't need to carefully inspect it to know that this was undeniably related to the Bone Sage's own. Although Han Li didn't know what secrets it concealed, it had caused that deep old schemer to lose his self control.

With that in mind, Han Li couldn't help but examine the embroidered cloth.

The originally indistinct map had completely disappeared. However, the map had been replaced with a pattern of a small golden sword of light. Regardless of how Han Li turned the embroidered cloth, the sword of light always pointed towards the northwest. The sword point shot a red line straight towards the edge of the embroidered cloth, releasing a faint fluorescence.

Han Li frowned. Although he didn't know the item's specific purpose, if he didn't understand such a simple map as this, then he must be an idiot.

This clearly illustrated that the object's holder would meet an opportunity should they follow the small sword to some location.

While grasping the map, Han Li became lost in contemplation.

It seemed the Bone Sage had been so hurried because the matter regarding the map was time sensitive. In addition to his happy expression, it was obvious that the prize was certain to be great.

Once Han Li came to this conclusion, he immediately turned his body in the direction indicated by the sword on the map. If he didn't rush, the prize would be seized by others as long as the map didn't expire first.

After some slight consideration and a long while of hesitation, he finally decided to follow this direction and left the desolate island in the blink of an eye.

About a quarter hour later, a vast, eerie black fog rushed towards the island from a distance. After circling around the cave's entrance, the fog scattered to reveal a pale skinned middle-aged man that appeared to lack even a single drop of blood.

When he saw that the restrictions and formation spells were destroyed and the spirit seal pillar had been pushed to the side, he immediately entered the underground cave with furrowed brows.

After a short moment, a long, resentful roar came from down below, causing the nearby land to tremble.

The middle-aged man then flew out of the cave and towards the sky as a black streak of radiance.

He apprehensively looked all around and shot out several tens of streaks of black radiance with a sudden twirl. Those streaks of black radiance turned into huge black birds that searched the nearby fifty kilometers.

But when the huge birds returned from their search with nothing to show, the middle-aged man's expression became extremely unsightly. He turned his head towards the sky and didn't make any other movements for a long while.

After a unknown amount of time, he suddenly broke out into cold laughter.

“Old monster, so what if you are able to escape? You are no longer the Devilish Ancestor of Profound Bones from before, and I am no longer one of your trifling Core Formation disciples. Once I am finished with the matters of Heavenvoid Hall, I will ferret you out from the Scattered Star Seas.” With no further hesitation, he soared through the skies and transformed back into a huge black fog.

Then, as if wanting to vent his anger, a black beam of light as thick as a bucket shot out of the black fog, causing the entrance of the cave to cave in and turn into ruins.

Afterwards, the black fog flew into the distant sky like a meteor

streak.

Naturally, Han Li was unaware of what had just taken place. He was flying in the direction of the map, pushing his magic treasure at his greatest speed.

As he was fearful of coming across the Bone Sage, Han Li was extremely vigilant and would occasionally release the entirety of his spiritual sense to check for an ambush.

After several days of flight, nothing unexpected had occurred, much to Han Li's relief.

But one day, just as Han Li was hastening on his journey, he suddenly heard the sound of conflict coming from ahead of him. From the faint explosions and dazzling flashes of light, it seemed that there were cultivators in the midst of fighting.

Han Li frowned and used his powerful spiritual sense to carefully gaze into the distance.

A man and a woman were currently fighting against three embroidered-clothed cultivators surrounded in an evil Qi.

However, their strength was pathetically low, and they were only at early Foundation Establishment. It seemed that the man and the woman were at a disadvantage.

Han Li rubbed his nose. Since he knew they weren't a threat, he

felt disinclined to taking a detour and prepared to fly past them. As for the cultivators fighting, he wouldn't bother asking them anything. He had something important to attend to.

With that thought, Han Li increased his speed and rushed forth as a streak of green light, appearing before them in the blink of an eye.

The combatants were greatly shocked and happened to all recoil away from him and retrieve their magic tools.

As Han Li flew past them, he paused for a moment and casually swept his gaze over them.

“Yi!” The female cultivator from the male-female pair seemed to recognize Han Li. She shouted with joy, “Elder Han, I am the main disciple of the Exquisite Sound Sect's Envoy of the Right. Those three cultivators are from our sect's great enemy, the Poisonous Dragon Union.”

Chapter 430: Wen Siyue

Han Li was startled by her yell and he couldn't help but look over and examine the woman.

“You're a disciple of the Exquisite Sound Sect?” Han Li asked with a calm expression.

The young woman appeared to be about twenty years of age and had a face of soft jade with skin as fair as snow. Her flowery expression of pleasant surprise revealed a very sweet charm.

“Disciple Wen Siyue pays her respect to Elder Han!” This lovely young woman hastily flew to Han Li's side and respectfully gave him a bow. Her body wasn't lacking in neither grace, given her firm chest and ample bottom. In addition to the young woman's sweet voice, he could detect an intoxicatingly sweet fragrance from her.

Han Li calmly sized her up and slowly asked, “How did you recognize me? Have I seen you before?” Han Li felt slightly puzzled as he was certain that this was the first time he had seen her.

“Although this is the first time Junior has paid her respects to Senior, the sect master hung several of Senior's portraits in the offerings hall. I've seen them every time I passed by.” The young woman respectfully said.

Han Li was stunned and didn't know whether he should laugh or cry. He didn't think that those three woman from the Exquisite

Sound Sect would actually do something like this. This must be one of their method of disseminating the fact that he had become the Exquisite Sound Sect's elder.

Despite feeling slightly gloomy, his face didn't reveal the slightest peculiarity, and he turned his gaze towards the middle-aged man to the side, and spoke with a slight smile, "Brother Wen, I haven't seen you in so many years. It seems you're doing well!"

Ever since the middle-aged man saw Han LI, his face had appeared odd. Now, his expression had become even more complicated. When he looked at Han Li, his gaze seemed to contain both admiration and a feeling of self-inferiority.

"I didn't expect that Senior Han would still recognize me. Although I've seen your portrait at the Exquisite Sound Sect, I didn't dare to believe it given that so much time had passed. Congratulations on Senior's Core Formation." He spoke with slight bitterness.

This middle-aged man was actually the youth Wen Qiang that Han LI originally met at Stalwart Star Island.

Although his appearance resembled that of his youth, his hair was now growing white, and his face showed signs of aging. It seemed he was on the verge of appearing elderly.

"There is no need for Brother Wen to call me Senior. After all, we were acquainted when we were still of the same generation!" Han Li spoke with a smile.

Han Li saw that Wen Qiang was only at mid Foundation Establishment and wouldn't have any hope of Core Formation. Han Li couldn't help but inwardly sigh upon seeing a youth at his prime had become so elderly.

In truth, even if Wen Siyue didn't yell for him to stop, he would've done so anyways. With his outstanding memory, he would've recognized Wen Qiang from a single glance despite not having met him many times. As he had originally given Han Li a good impression, it was only natural for Han Li to lend him aid in passing and not stand by and watch him die.

After hearing Han Li, Wen Qiang stated that he didn't dare to do so. Han Li could only follow suit.

When the young woman heard the two chatting, her mouth slightly widened from alarm.

Her soft, spirited eyes blinked several times, wanting to ask something. But she was interrupted when Han Li spoke with a cold voice towards the three enemies, "Where do you three think you're going? Did I say you could leave?"

The three enemy cultivators were panic stricken upon seeing a hostile Core Formation cultivator arrive. But after seeing that Han Li didn't seem to mind them and was happily chatting, they couldn't help but slowly fall back and test their luck.

The three turned deathly white upon hearing Han Li. After

exchanging a mutual glance, they immediately flew off on their magic tools with defensive magic tools and barriers of all colors at their side.

“Humph! You’re courting death!” Han Li coldly snorted and lightly flicked his finger, shooting out three brilliant streaks of azure light, appearing behind them in a single instant.

Pff. Pff. The three cultivator’s magic tools and defensive barriers were shredded through like paper by the thick swordlights. With three simultaneous miserable screams, their magic tools filled the sky with fluorescent lights before disappearing without a trace.

After the young woman and Wen Qiang watched Han Li’s extermination of the three Poison Dragon Union cultivators, they couldn’t help but look at Han Li with even greater respect.

Han Li inwardly nodded his head. While these three azure essence swordstreaks appeared unremarkable, they actually consumed a significant amount of spiritual power. Regardless, Han Li was quite satisfied as they were able to kill Foundation Establishment cultivators in a single strike. It seemed that the azure essence swordstreaks had increased in power along with his cultivation.

Han Li seemed to have thought of something and asked, “Ah, that’s right. Since you both have the surname Wen, does that mean...”

When Wen Qiang heard Han Li, his face revealed

embarrassment, and he replied, “Senior Han jests. Siyue is my daughter.”

Han Li was stunned, but soon burst into laughter, “Then I must congratulate Brother Wen! Fellow Daoist Siyue has reached Foundation Establishment at such a young age. Perhaps she will one day reach Core Formation as well!”

Having heard that, Wen Qiang laughed with a prideful expression, “I won’t conceal this from Senior Han. Siyue is truly my pride. She became Foundation Establishment after only a little more than twenty years. I have high hopes for her. While I won’t be progressing any farther, I can only hope for her to travel farther than I ever did.”

Wen Qiang then looked at the young woman with a tender expression, causing Siyue to turn her head away in embarrassment.

Han Li looked at the young woman with a smile and faintly nodded his head. Wen Siyue was gifted with remarkable aptitude.

Afterwards, Wen Qiang and Han Li each spoke about their own experiences.

Although they didn’t have a particularly deep friendship, meeting an old friend after many years of separation was always a pleasant matter.

From their excited chat, Han Li heard a story that was not uncommon to cultivators with mediocre aptitudes throughout the Scattered Star Seas.

Not long after Han Li departed, Wen Qiang's master had met the end of his lifespan during cultivation. After muddling around Stalwart Star Island for several tens of years, he managed to barely breakthrough to the Foundation Establishment stage. After that, he started to wander through all sorts of islands and accumulated experience. Then after sometime, he met a female disciple from the Exquisite Sound Sect and became one of their external affairs disciples.

From then on, he handled all sorts of miscellaneous tasks for the Exquisite Sound Sect. But shortly after his daughter Siyue was born, his wife died from a strange illness. Due to his deep love for his wife, he decided not to remarry and raised Wen Siyue by himself. Naturally, she had been brought in to be a disciple of the Exquisite Sound Sect.

Having heard this, Han Li inwardly sighed several times and bitterly laughed. In contrast, his own experiences were quite simple. Apart from cultivation, there was practically nothing for him to talk about.

But in the end, Han Li asked the father-daughter pair why they were fighting at this remote place. In response, Wen Qiang appeared furious while his daughter appeared sad.

Han Li was greatly baffled by this.

After some hesitation, Wen Qiang slowly gave an explanation.

When Wen Siyue grew to adulthood, she was to marry a young cultivator with limitless prospects and become his Dao companion. Unfortunately, the young cultivator perished in a fight against other cultivators shortly after they were wed.

As such, the newly available and charming Wen Siyue attracted the eyes of many male cultivators in the sect. But as Wen Siyue was just recently widowed, she didn't wish to quickly remarry. As such, she turned down her many requests for pair cultivation. Consequently, she unconsciously offended a high ranker in the Exquisite Sound Sect and was assigned to a dangerous and strenuous task: she had to retrieve a precious material from within the Poison Dragon Union's territory.

With his daughter in such a dangerous situation, Wen Qiang naturally couldn't stand idly by and instead accompanied his daughter on the journey. However, their secret tasks had been discovered by the Poison Dragon Union at an unknown time through unknown means. As a result, the father-daughter pair had been chased down by three three Poison Dragon Union cultivators and were forced to fight with their lives on the line.

If chance had not brought Han Li by them, they were certain to have met a horrible end.

Upon hearing Wen Qiang's indignant words, Han Li stroked his chin and remained silent for a long while. Wen Qiang's words

implied that he wanted Han Li to seek justice on their behalf.

However, this was only one side of the story, and he wasn't willing to recklessly involve himself in the internal affairs of the Exquisite Sound Sect over such a shallow friendship.

Chapter 431: Heavenvoid Hall

After muttering to himself, Han Li slowly replied while Wen Qiang watched expectantly, “Since Brother Wen is also an Exquisite Sound Sect member, he should know I am a member only in name. I have never involved myself with the inner affairs of the sect. However, if this matter is as Brother Wen described and Fellow Daoist Siyue has been greatly wronged, I will mention this matter to Fairy Violet Spirit the next time I see her. But if she doesn’t do anything about this, I’m not quite sure what can be done.”

Having heard that Han Li was unwilling to personally take matters into his own hands, Wen Qiang felt slightly disappointed.

He also knew that his friendship with Han Li wasn’t deep. Even saving him and his daughter could already be considered as cherishing their old friendship. He repeatedly expressed his thanks without any complaints and had Wen Siyue kowtow in respect to Han Li, but Han Li had refused with a smile.

However, Han Li then asked with slight confusion, “Isn’t Fellow Daoist Siyue the personal disciple of the Envoy of the Right? Why don’t you raise this matter to her?”

Wen Siyue appeared even sadder and explained with a soft voice, “Senior Han doesn’t know this but this mission was assigned by a close relative of my master. My master had wished for us to become Dao companions, but my refusal caused her to become very angry!”

With that said, the woman wore a helpless expression, revealing an appearance of tragic beauty. Han Li couldn't help but stare for a moment before forcing himself to turn his head towards Wen Qiang for fear of looking longer. He said, "I am here on an important matter and cannot journey together with you. I will be taking my leave!"

Han Li cupped his hands towards them. The pair naturally refrained from making any unpleasant requests for him to stay and hastily said words of thanks. Han Li then faintly smiled and shot through the sky as an azure streak of light.

The father-daughter pair looked in the direction that the azure streak disappeared. After a long while, Wen Siyue spoke in an angry, cute voice, "Father, you never told me that you were actually old friends with our sect's Elder Han! From your chat, you also seemed to have met him before he entered Core Formation. Could you tell your daughter about it? Elder Han is actually quite a mystery to us!"

Near the end, her angry voice had turned to one of strong curiosity.

Wen Qiang sighed and lovingly said, "Your father and Senior Han had only met several times. We don't have a deep relationship. In addition, I had met him when our cultivations were quite low. When I suddenly saw him in the offerings hall, I was truly shocked, and felt restless several days later. For this person to actually enter Core Formation and become our sect Elder, is a truly inconceivable affair!"

Wen Qiang couldn't help but then recall the moment when Han Li recognized him. He then stopped talking and became absent-minded for a short time.

Wen Siyue saw that her father was thinking of something and silently waited at his side. The father and daughter peacefully floated in the sky with their clothes fluttering in the wind.

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The nearby empty oceans suddenly flooded with activity. Every few days, cultivators hurriedly flew across this location high above with pleasant surprise.

At this location, there was a huge palace floating in the sky without the slightest movement.

The palace was about four hundred meters tall and was crafted from flawless white jade. It was exquisitely beautiful and released sparkling twinkles of light. Surrounding it was a layer of dense golden light that encompassed about four thousand meters in height.

The cultivators that were traveling to it flew into the palace without any hesitation and easily passed through the barrier with a flash of white light.

One day, a streak of azure light arrived below the palace and came to a sudden stop. The azure light faded away to reveal a

youth with a common appearance, Han Li who had followed the direction of his map.

He looked at the embroidered clothed map with slight hesitation and glanced around, ensuring that nothing else was nearby. He had found nothing after looking down at the sea for a long time.

Han Li's hesitation only grew stronger. With a sudden thought coming to mind, he abruptly raised his head.

Upon seeing the exquisite jade palace floating among the clouds, Han Li gasped with surprise.

He blankly stared at the palace for a long while before he recovered from his shock. He didn't immediately approach the palace hall, instead deciding to deliberate for a moment. But suddenly, his expression stirred and his body flashed with azure light, causing him to disappear without a trace.

A short moment later, a scarlet cloud rushed over and stopped close to where Han Li had just been. The red cloud scattered to reveal a red-haired old man with an embroidered cloth in hand.

He looked at the embroidered cloth in his hand and coldly examined his surroundings. When he turned his head to the sky and saw the palace, he couldn't help but reveal joy. Soon after, the red haired old man flew up into the sky in a red cloud without a second thought.

Then with a flash of white light, the old man passed through the gold light barrier. Han Li reappeared nearby shortly after. With a creased brow, his expression began incessantly shifting.

In the following week, Han Li patiently concealed himself nearby and saw two other Core Formation cultivators enter the palace's light barrier. They also had an embroidered cloth map.

One day, Han Li's patience had finally run dry, and he flew towards the golden barrier. With a flip of his hand, he took out his map and slowly poured spiritual power into it. The map then released a white spiritual light and wrapped Han Li within it. Taking a step forward, Han Li easily passed through the barrier as if nothing was there.

After turning his head back toward the light barrier, Han Li flew towards the beautiful palace without any lingering hesitation.

After flying closer to the palace, Han Li became aware of the huge, silver ancient characters that hung forty meters above the entrance of the palace, "Heavenvoid Hall".

Not only were these characters grand and imposing, but the stroke edges were extremely incisive. After only a quick glance, his eyes felt a faint, dull ache.

He hastily lowered his head in fright, not daring to look any further!

With gritted teeth, Han Li then carefully walked into the palace as he gazed into its depths.

Han Li was amazed once he entered. He saw a straight, narrow passage made completely of translucent, fine jade. He couldn't see its end. It was nine meters wide and twelve meters tall, causing those who walked through it to feel an uncomfortable mental pressure.

Han Li frowned and released his spiritual sense after some thought, but his expression immediately revealed surprise as his spiritual sense met a wall in every direction and was forcibly bounced back. He couldn't even spread out his spiritual sense, let alone search the palace with it.

Han Li's eyes flashed with spirited light, and he attentively examined a jade wall, discovering a flicker of faint sparkling light. He would've missed it had he not been paying close attention. It seemed this entire passage restricted those with great capabilities.

Han Li then extended his finger and lightly stroked the fine jade. Although he couldn't recognize the exact type of restrictions, he knew they contained deep and immeasurable spiritual power, causing Han Li's heart to slightly tremble.

He silently withdrew his finger and pondered for a moment with chin in hand before raising his head and deciding to walk forward.

With narrowed eyes, Han Li calmly looked around the interior of the passage as he walked through.

Since there were restrictions in place, he didn't have to be fearful that someone was concealed nearby and was about to ambush him, allowing him to continue on without fear.

However, this ravine-like passage was truly long. He walked for the time it took to finish a meal, before finally reaching its end where an exit made of water-blue radiance appeared before his eyes.

With roused spirits, Han Li hurriedly walked through it.

Han Li's eyes shrunk and he instantly grew alarmed. The blue radiance revealed huge hall. The hall spanned fifteen hundred meters and was extremely imposing. Even if several thousand people were present, it wouldn't be crowded in the slightest.

But even odder was that several tens of huge jade pillars were evenly distributed throughout the hall. Not only was the jade pillar several meters thick, but it was also exquisitely carved with all sorts of rare, strange beasts that some of which he had never seen before. Each one was vivid and lifelike, containing their own unique Spiritual Qi.

At the very top of these pillars were several tens of cultivators, each wearing their own clothes and standing or sitting at their own volition.

Apart from a few cultivators, each of them were monopolizing a single pillar. Furthermore, there was nobody loudly talking; they

were all minding their own business.

Han Li's arrival had lazily drawn the attention of a small portion of the cultivators. However, a few of them revealed shock upon seeing him.

Han Li revealed a bitter smile as he had also recognized them!

Chapter 432: Grandmaster Zenith Yin

Among the people already in the hall was the [Bone Sage](#) that he had separated from recently. He was sitting cross-legged at a jade pillar in the corner of the hall, icily staring at him with unconcealed surprise.

TL Note: The Master of Bones, Xiao Cha, will now be referred to as the Bone Sage, Xiao Cha.

At another jade pillar was a woman staring at Han Li with surprise. She was the Exquisite Sound Sect's Fairy Violet Spirit. An elegant man wearing an azure jacket with a composed appearance stood at her side.

When the man saw that Fairy Violet Spirit's expression was slightly odd he couldn't help but take measure of Han Li. Seeing that Han Li appeared youthful, his eyes coldly glinted, and he asked Fairy Violet Spirit a few questions.

As a result, Fairy Violet Spirit gracefully smiled and whispered to the man as if she were explaining Han Li's identity.

Han Li frowned and turned his eyes away from them. His gaze focused on another area where someone had gazed at Han Li with ill intent.

Han Li was baffled to find an old man with a face of fury, looking towards him. Han Li was startled for a moment before recognizing him and feeling annoyed. That person was the Six United Palace's Elder Miao.

Due to the matter of the Infant Carp Beast, Elder Gu had wished to kill him. However, Han Li took advantage of the great damage to his Origin Qi and his wondrous formation spell restrictions to turn the tables and eliminate him. Many years had past since this had occurred, but Elder Miao still recognized him. It seemed he felt rather deeply about Elder Gu's death.

Han Li inwardly muttered to himself, but found he didn't particularly care about it anymore. After observing the rest of the hall, there were no other cultivators he recognized.

Thus after some slight hesitation, he casually found a jade pillar with no one on it and flew to its top. He sat cross-legged before sizing up a few of the other cultivators that he didn't recognize.

Because Han Li's spiritual sense was restricted, he wasn't able to make out the cultivation of others. He only knew that a majority of cultivators here were at Core Formation or higher with Foundation Establishment cultivators in a small minority. There may even be a Nascent Soul eccentric or two among them.

With that in mind, Han Li carefully examined the others while he sat on the pillar.

Some time later, he had identified the two that were most likely to be Nascent Soul cultivators.

One was a yellow-robed, thin-faced old confucian scholar. He leisurely held his back with one hand while looking through a shabby jade slip with the other. He occasionally swayed his head

with interest. He seemed incredibly bookish.

The other was a beautiful middle-aged woman wearing spotless white clothes. She was surrounded with a bone-chilling aura, preventing any strangers from approaching her.

At the moment, the icy beauty was expressionlessly cleaning her jet-black longsword. She appeared extremely proud. Ever since Han Li had entered the hall, he hadn't seen her look in any other direction.

Although the other cultivators also appeared calm and indifferent, their easy mannerisms seemed somewhat forced when compared to those two.

In addition, a large portion of the cultivators in the hall gazed at these two with a trace of respect that was absent when they looked at other cultivators. It was this slight difference that made Han Li certain that these two were Nascent Soul experts.

Originally, Han Li understood that apart from those two, there were certain to be other extraordinary individuals that couldn't be underestimated. A most obvious example would be the Bone Sage.

Although the old Devil's cultivation was only at late Core Formation, he was far superior to other late Core Formation cultivators in a fight, second only to true Nascent Soul cultivators.

Who could possibly know what other hidden tigers lay in wait

amongst the group?

Han Li inwardly muttered to himself for a moment, having seemingly forgotten that he himself could dispatch similar grade cultivators without much effort.

In any case, Han Li grew increasingly cautious after his musings and would occasionally ponder the true strength of those gathered here. This probably wasn't going to end up being a boring meeting of cultivators.

After all, the mystery displayed in the embroidered cloth map fragment and the floating Heavenvoid Hall had even attracted a few Nascent Soul cultivators. This guaranteed that something extraordinary was about to occur.

Unfortunately, he was completely ignorant of the details. Otherwise, he would be planning his future actions, thereby reducing his exposure to danger and limiting any disadvantages he might suffer from sudden surprises.

With the situation being what it was, Han Li could only act in accordance to how events played out.

As Han Li was lost in thought, he suddenly heard a sound transmission from the Bone Sage, "Youngster, I didn't expect you'd also have a Heavenvoid map fragment. How about we cooperate in this treasure hunt?"

‘Treasure hunt?’ Upon hearing those two words, Han Li’s heart glowed with joy, knowing that it was correct for him to come. With an unchanged expression, he calmly replied, “How does Senior intend to cooperate with me? Please give me an explanation!”

The Bone Sage’s expression brightened after hearing that Han Li hadn’t refused. Just as he was thinking about what to say, two people swaggered into the hall.

When Han Li and the Bone Sage saw the two, their expressions greatly changed.

While Han Li’s expression had only slightly paled, the Master of Bone’s face completely distorted with his eyes revealing a blood-thirsty craze. Fortunately, his mind was quick and this expression only lasted for an instant before his calm expression reappeared.

The two that entered hadn’t taken notice of the Bone Sage’s abnormality. However, Han Li inwardly grumbled upon seeing the two, as one of them was Zenith Yin Island’s young island lord Wu Chou.

Although Han Li was unfamiliar with the pale faced, slender eyed middle-aged cultivator by his side, he had a faint guess about who he was and couldn’t help but feel regret for having come here.

At that moment, the middle-aged man brought Wu Chou into the hall and coldly swept his gaze in every direction. Soon, his gaze fell upon a cultivator with a sallow face, and he coldly laughed.

The sallow-faced cultivator paled, and his body slightly trembled. But after some quick thought, he immediately stood straight.

“Good, very good!” After finishing his chilling laughter, his eyes coldly glinted and fell upon Han Li.

When his gaze fell upon Han Li, he felt as if a viper was staring at him and felt his hair stand on end. Despite his calm appearance, his heart was in great disarray!

Han Li immediately felt amazement. The middle-aged man unexpectedly revealed a trace of unconcealed pleasant surprise upon seeing him. Although his expression soon became calm once more, Han Li was able to clearly see it. This caused Han Li to be at a loss with doubts pouring into his mind.

The Bone Sage also saw this and was stunned. But soon after, his eyes shifted several times, and he lowered his head in contemplation.

At that moment, the middle-aged man blankly looked at the old confucian scholar and the beautiful woman for a moment before restraining his cold gaze. He amiably cupped his hands to the two and said, “I didn’t expect to see South Crane Island’s Brother Qing and White Wall Mountain’s Lady Wen. I’m truly sorry for not recognizing you!”

“There is no disrespect. My clan is comparable to your own Zenith Yin Island. We only happened to meet by chance. After all,

this is an opportunity that only occurs once every three hundred years. I've also heard that Man Huzi acquired a Heavenvoid map fragment as an offering. He should be coming shortly. When the time comes, us old bastards will gather together once more." The old man put away the jade slip and spoke with an insincere smile.

"Man Huzi is also coming?" The middle-aged man's expression changed as if greatly fearful of that name.

"That's right. I heard that his life is quickly coming to an end. He is coming to Heavenvoid Hall to find life prolonging fruit to refine a few life lengthening pills in hopes he may live a few more years." The old man spoke proudly with a voice containing hints of cold mockery.

The icy beautiful woman continued to look down at her sword treasure as she cleaned it, completely ignoring their conversation.

When Han Li heard their conversation, he couldn't help but take in a breath of cold air. He had acquired quite a bit of information from those few words.

The middle-aged man next to Wu Chou was actually Grandmaster Zenith Yin, and their words revealed that there was yet another Nascent Soul cultivator to come.

There were also life prolonging spirit medicines in Heavenvoid Hall! Inconceivable. It was no wonder that Nascent Soul experts so impatiently rushed here.

Chapter 433: Ninecurl Spirit Ginseng

As Han Li pondered about the information he had just received, he was also wondering whether or not he wanted to wade through these muddy waters.

Although he didn't know what was about to come, this strange palace in the sky seemed similar to the State of Yue's Trial by Blood and Fire and had been completely constructed by ancient cultivators. Although it contained many treasures, its dangers were quite plentiful as well.

Grandmaster Zenith Yin's unexplainable expression had scared him quite a bit. Could he be plotting something? Regardless of anything else going on, it would be wiser for Han Li to immediately withdraw.

However, he had gathered from those old eccentrics' words that this place only opened once every three hundred years. If he were to turn back now, he'd never have another chance. This was enough cause for further hesitation.

While Han Li was lost in thought, he suddenly heard the Bone Sage's voice.

"Youngster, do you have anything on you that Zenith Yin might want, by any chance? I can't think of another reason that he would look at you like that. If I guessed correctly, he wants to dispose of you!" Although the Bone Sage spoke indifferently, his words obviously contained a trace of mockery.

Han Li mentally snorted and replied, “If Island Lord Zenith Yin were to learn that your esteemed self is here, he’d probably be very interested. He’d almost certainly want to have a proper chat with his long lost master.”

“You dare threaten me?” The Bone Sage asked sinisterly.

“I wouldn’t dare! Given Senior’s status and abilities, how could I ever dare to do so? However, it’s probably in Senior’s best interest to not take delight in other’s misfortune. Else, I might accidentally have a slip of the tongue when my life is in danger and unintentionally implicate Senior.” Han Li replied expressionlessly.

The Bone Sage remained silent for some time.

Han Li believed he had flown into a rage from embarrassment and didn’t wish to speak with Han Li any further. But that had only been greater cause of shock when he suddenly heard a string of icy words that left him pleasantly surprised.

“Do you wish to form a Nascent Soul?”

“Senior, what are you getting at?” Han Li asked, forcefully restraining the excitement within his heart.

“Hehe, what do I mean? My words were quite simple. I know of an item that will double your chances of forming a Nascent Soul. It’s located in Heavenvoid Hall. There’s no other item that can do

this. If you join hands with me and seize the opportunity to eliminate my traitorous disciple Zenith Yin, I will tell you the method for acquiring it. How about it? Since I cultivated the Dao of the demon ghost, I can't use this item. Otherwise, I wouldn't have even mentioned it to you. And even if you do not agree to join hands with me, it seems that Zenith Yin will take the initiative to find you either way. When that time comes, hehe..." The Bone Sage made use of the carrot and the stick while expressing his unconcealed malice towards Grandmaster Zenith Yin.

Han Li didn't immediately decide. He instead sat in silence and frowned, deep in thought.

The Bone Sage's youthly incarnation also appeared quite calm and unhurried. He believed a Core Formation cultivator was incapable of refusing such a huge offer. He just needed to calmly wait for Han Li's eventual agreement.

At that moment, Grandmaster Zenith Yin and Wu Chou flew to the old Confucian scholar's pillar and chatted intermittently, occasionally saying something to the beautiful woman surnamed Wen.

However, the beautiful woman closed her eyes after she finished polishing her sword. It seemed she didn't pay them any attention.

Grandmaster Zenith Yin didn't appear angry or embarrassed at this cold treatment and continued to speak with a smile. It was clear he's the shrewd type.

Han Li slightly brought these people into his gaze and grew increasingly fearful of Grandmaster Zenith Yin. Not only was this person's cultivation deep, but his wits far exceeded that of ordinary cultivators. What else could have forced the Bone Sage to tread the Dao of a demon ghost and abandon his path to reincarnation? The Bone Sage clearly hated not being able to grind his traitorous disciples bones and scatter their ashes.

However, regardless of the resentment between the old devils Bone Sage and Zenith Yin, Zenith Yin's gaze towards Han Li was far from friendly.

Although it can't be said that he had no chance of escaping from a Nascent Soul cultivator, in a true confrontation that possibility was pathetically small.

After all, there was too great of a difference between early Core Formation and the Nascent Soul stage. Even if his magic treasure and Gold Devouring Beetles were even more powerful, he would still be slaughtered without much effort on their part.

After some consideration, Han Li eventually responded to the Bone Sage, "Give me an explanation of that item you mentioned. Does it have anything to do with what you said about becoming a Nascent Soul cultivator?"

"Of course. So long as you are willing to join hands with me, I will unquestionably divulge a few things to you." The Bone Sage was slightly delighted and stealthily replied.

Han Li didn't immediately respond and bluntly closed his eyes, pretending to refine Qi.

“The item is called Ninecurl Spirit Ginseng. It is an item of transformed Heaven-Earth Spiritual Qi. Although its main body is a spiritual herb, its pure spiritual nature causes it to transform into an animal or insect, allowing it to move about on their own. It is quite good at hiding. Many years ago, I saw this item in the Heavenvoid Hall. At the time, my cultivation was far too low, and I didn't have any appropriate magic tools on hand. As such, I was forced to let it go. The second time I came here, I was at the Nascent Soul stage and no longer needed to waste the effort to acquire it. But it should prove quite useful to you.” The Bone Sage spoke as if he had been unwilling to let it go.

“Ninecurl Spirit Ginseng?” Han Li took a cold breath.

Han Li had long known of this legendary immortal herb. Although Han Li had often seen this herb mentioned in ancient medicine herb records, he believed this item had appeared in the mortal world during times of antiquity. Could this item actually exist in Heavenvoid Hall?

Nevertheless, discovering one or two stalks of such an immortal herb wasn't impossible.

However, this was that first time that he heard the Ninecurl Spirit Ginseng was useful in condensing a Nascent Soul. The records had always been vague about its specific uses and hardly mentioned them.

‘Could this old devil have lied to me so that I would cooperate with him?’ Han Li suspected.

Perhaps having guessed Han Li’s doubt, the Bone Sage continued, “Be at ease! When we break through the barrier, I will first help you acquire this item at the second pass. Then after we eliminate my traitorous disciple, I will give you a secret recipe. So long as you create the medicine pill in accordance to its instructions, it will greatly increase your odds of condensing a Nascent Soul. However, I’ve also come to Heavenvoid Hall in search of useful cultivation materials. When the time comes, you will have to lend me your assistance so that I might prove more successful.” The Bone Sage took the initiative to eliminate Han Li’s doubts and raised a condition that answered a majority of Han Li’s suspicions.

“Fine! If you’re truly certain about being able to kill Zenith Yin, I might lend my assistance.” Han Li eventually agreed to forming a temporary alliance with the Bone Sage.

In truth, this alliance was quite weak, and it was quite difficult to say how long it would last. Perhaps it would even fracture immediately after Grandmaster Zenith Yin had been killed.

Han Li inwardly let out a long sigh.

From the old devil’s tone, this actually wasn’t his first time here. Having an experienced ally was far better than fumbling around on his own. At the very least, he could learn a bit about the basics of Heavenvoid Hall and unquestionably trust the Bone Sage’s desire

to kill Grandmaster Zenith Yin.

With that, Han Li and the Bone Sage came to an agreement, and Han Li started to make some indirect inquiries about the Heavenvoid Hall.

After having a long, stealthy chat with the Bone Sage, Han Li's expression became unsightly. It seemed that opportunity and danger walked hand in hand. This trip to the Heavenvoid Hall in particular would prove to be extremely dangerous.

He couldn't help but sigh. Soon after, his mind drifted and he began to refine Qi in meditation.

Inside the hall, Han Li didn't need to worry about any sudden attacks. From his earlier tests, apart from some floating techniques and other such minor magic techniques, any other techniques couldn't be cast. Any magic power used past a certain point would dissolve. Even the magic treasures contained in one's body would be like a dead, magicless object.

These restrictions were amazing!

In the following week, the cultivators in the hall grew more and more numerous, eventually gathering over a hundred people.

The jade pillars had long been filled by other cultivators. Those that came later could only find a spot to sit on the floor and rest there for the time being.

Chapter 434: Gathering

Fewer and fewer cultivators arrived until many days later when the gradual flow ceased.

However, Grandmaster Zenith Yin and the old Confucian scholar were sitting in silence with solemn expressions. They would occasionally sweep their gaze across the room as if they were waiting for something.

‘Could they be waiting for Man Huzi?’ Han Li naturally noticed this and was very curious. As such, he also kept an eye out.

When afternoon arrived, footsteps could be heard from the entrance of the hall. With several flashes of blue radiance, two people walked into the hall one at a time. One of them was an old Daoist with a reddish complexion, and the other was an old man dressed as a farmer with a bitter expression on his thin, dark face.

After these two appeared, the cultivators in the hall became restless. A majority of people looked at the two with a trace of respect.

It seemed these two were quite famous.

Grandmaster Zenith Yin and the old Confucian scholar looked at them with ill intent. Grandmaster Zenith Yin’s expression was particularly harsh.

The two newly arrived experts returned the other party's hostile gazes upon seeing them. The old Daoist snorted and said, "Old Devil Zenith Yin! You've arrived quite early. It seems you of the Devil Dao are quite determined to come out on top during this Heavenvoid Hall."

"[Tian Wuzi](#)! It isn't that this Grandmaster arrived early but you hypocrites arrived far too late. As I was of the opinion that your map fragment's information was false, I wasn't expecting you to arrive. This also good. This Grandmaster now has the opportunity to surpass you." Grandmaster Zenith Yin responded with a sinister expression.

The 悟子 Wuzi in his name can mean enlightened one.

"Who is it that you think you're going to surpass, Zenith Yin? Please, enlighten us!" Without waiting for the old Daoist to strike back, another voice resounded throughout the hall.

When Zenith Yin and the old Confucian scholar heard the new voice, their expressions greatly changed. The taciturn beautiful woman suddenly raised her head and coldly spoke while staring at the hall's entrance.

"[Wan Tianming](#), you've arrived!"

Quite suitably, his name 天明 Tianming means dawn or daybreak.

"It seems Lady Wen has also arrived. Why does my appearance surprise you?" After this was said, a blur shot in from the outside and revealed a middle-aged man with a violet robe and jade belt.

This person had a squarish face and a large brow with white shiny teeth. He indifferently glanced at the beautiful woman

before turning his gaze towards Grandmaster Zenith Yin. His very presence exuded an imposing aura.

Grandmaster Zenith Yin shut his lips with an eerie expression and remained silent in response to this man's blunt gaze.

This greatly shocked Han Li. He couldn't help but closely examine the new arrivals. Han Li bewilderedly guessed that since an early Nascent Soul cultivator such as Grandmaster Zenith Yin was somewhat fearful of them, this person must be a mid Nascent Soul cultivator!

From what he saw, the three new arrivals should be cultivators of the Scattered Star Seas' Righteous Dao. As for Zenith Yin and the others, they should be of the Devilish Dao.

The earlier restlessness of the hall had been immediately quelled by the middle-aged man's arrival. Only the faint whispering of "Sect Master of the Myriad Gates of Enlightenment" could be heard.

Obviously, the middle-aged man seemed to have a higher status when compared to the other two.

"Wan Tianming, was my sword attendant injured by one of your disciples?" The beautiful woman surnamed Wen asked this question without restraint as if fearless of this person.

"That is obviously untrue. It was just that my sect's disciples saw

that your sword attendant's cultivation was quite good and they merely wanted to swap pointers. Could it be that Lady Wen wishes for a violent escalation of hostilities over such a small matter?" Wan Tianming's eyes narrowed as he spoke with an indifferent expression.

"Swapping pointers? My sword attendant is only at early Foundation Establishment. Your disciples were clearly bullying her and deliberately embarrassing our sect." The beautiful woman's face grew cold.

"Humiliate Madam's sect? I don't dare! For the sake of the Archsaint's reputation, I will later have those disciples offer you their humble apologies." The middle-aged man slightly frowned and spoke without much care.

"What does this matter of mine have to do with my lord husband? If you are unwilling, then how about I use my Virtuous Duality Sword Arts to swap pointers with Sect Master Wan?" The beautiful woman became even more furious at his words.

"Compare notes with Lady Wen? Let's forget that. If the [Archsaint of the Six Paths](#) were to know that I bullied his wife, he would seek my life. I don't wish to incite a great war between the the Righteous and Devilish Dao." Wan Tianming chuckled as if he found it ridiculous.

His title, 六道 Six Paths, references the Six Paths of Reincarnation.

When the beautiful woman heard this, her face reddened. After a final glare, she dropped the matter.

While the beautiful woman had let the matter drop with the middle-aged man, the middle-aged man was unwilling to do the same with Grandmaster Zenith Yin. He sneered at Grandmaster Zenith Yin. But just as he thought to say something, a rumble vibrated from the passage and faintly shook the entire hall.

Apart from the Nascent Soul eccentrics, all of the cultivators looked towards the entrance with alarm.

Grandmaster Zenith Yin and the old Confucian scholar looked at each other with a hint of concealed joy. However, Grandmaster Zenith Yin's happy expression seemed forced.

Wan Tianming's eyes coldly glinted and flashed with sharp killing intent. The old Daoist and the old farmer also seemed to know who was coming and revealed a trace of worry.

The vibrations soon grew stronger and more frequent, eventually revealing an exceptionally tall figure.

A blue-robed eccentric with a yellow curly beard suddenly walked in. It seemed that his every step caused the entire hall to sway as if he weighed over six thousand kilograms.

Under everyone's amazed gazes, he took note of the people within the hall without any regards before settling his eyes on Wan Tianming and burst into laughter.

“I didn’t think that great Sect Master Wan would come here. It seems it was correct for me to come here. I had always wished to contest myself against Sect Master Wan but it is unfortunate that I’ve never had the opportunity until now.” The eccentric looked at the middle-aged man with a provocative gaze.

“I too have looked forward to witnessing Brother Man’s Heaven Enduring Arts, reputed to be the greatest defensive devilish art in the Scattered Star Seas.” Wan Tianming coldly glanced at the eccentric and fearlessly replied.

“Hehe! Well said, well said! I have been looking forward to experiencing Sect Master Wan’s True Heavensifting Arts.” The eccentric widely grinned with unconcealed eagerness.

Unfortunately for him, Sect Master Wan didn’t wish to cause an incident at present. He softly spoke to the old Daoist and the old farmer before the three flew up toward a jade pillar.

Afterwards, the old Daoist spoke to the old Core Formation cultivator on the pillar with a smile. The Core Formation cultivator then vacated the pillar as if he had received a great favor and moved to a different place

When the eccentric saw this, his face held a trace of mockery. After raising his head and looking around, his body suddenly blurred before reappearing on a jade pillar.

As chance would have it, the jade pillar happened to be Han Li’s.

When Han Li saw this, his expression turned to shock.

“Get lost. This place is mine.” Just as the eccentric appeared on the pillar, he icily spoke to Han Li with a cold stare.

Han Li’s expression abruptly turned unsightly, and he involuntarily clenched his sleeved fists with force. He stayed silent, thinking of forcefully staying a moment. But he soon jumped off the jade pillar, followed by the wild laughter of the eccentric.

Han Li’s face was covered in an icy frost. Although it was extremely embarrassing, he could only endure it for the time being.

After all, the hall’s restrictions may be able to prevent cultivators from acting, but he wasn’t sure whether or not these restrictions had as large of an influence on a Nascent Soul cultivator. He didn’t wish to put his life at risk by allowing himself to be overwhelmed with emotion.

Suppressing a bellyful of grievances, he found a clean spot on the floor and sat down. The old Confucian scholar asked the eccentric with a beaming smile, “Brother Man arrived quite late. I had believed that Brother Man had changed his mind. Did you not intend to come?”

“How could that be possible? I had come to the Heavenvoid Hall in hopes of refining life lengthening pills! It was just that a few matters along the way had delayed me. As for Wan Tianming’s

arrival, I was quite amazed. Could it be that he knew that the life extending fruit had ripened and also wanted to pick a few of them?” The eccentric stroked his yellow beard and spoke with slight doubt.

“I’m not sure. However, there are countless other exceptional treasures in the Heavenvoid Hall. Who knows what he came here for?” The old Confucian scholar spoke with doubt.

Grandmaster Zenith Yin seemed to have thought of something and worryingly said, “Wan Tianming is among the top leading figures of the Righteous Dao. Does he intend to strive for the Heavenvoid Cauldron?”

“Heavenvoid Cauldron? That’s impossible! If that item were so easily obtained, it would’ve long been taken away by other cultivators before they ever got the chance.” Without waiting for [Man Huzi](#) to reply, the old Confucian scholar shook his head like a rattle drum.

His name 蛮胡子 Man Huzi could translate to Rough/Barbaric/Tyrannical Beard.

Chapter 435: The Heavenvoid Cauldron And The Heavenmend Pill

“That might not be certain. I heard that the disciples of the Myriad Gates of Enlightenment have spent the past few years searching for Gold Thread Silkworms. But information regarding their search suddenly stopped, possibly from having found them. With the assistance of these exotic insects, it is quite possible for the master of the Myriad Gates of Enlightenment to acquire the Heavenvoid Cauldron.” Grandmaster Zenith Yin frowned and unconsciously looked at Wan Tianming and the others with great worry.

The three Righteous Dao Nascent Soul cultivators were currently sitting down cross-legged on a single pillar as if they had no intention of speaking.

“Humph! Not only is it possible that Wan Tianming possesses Gold Thread Silkworms, I’ve heard that you, Zenith Yin, have acquired two mutant fire serpents from Li Fire Island. Your ambitions for this trip are also quite large!” Man Huzi shot Grandmaster Zenith Yin a glance and spoke without restraint. He appeared somewhat disdainful of Grandmaster Zenith Yin’s stealthy actions.

When Grandmaster Zenith Yin heard this, his expression abruptly changed several times before he recovered his calm. However, he was profusely cursing in his heart. There was no question that his own confidants had divulged this information since it had been heard by Man Huzi.

It seems that in addition to acquiring the life prolonging fruit, Man Huzi wished to keep watch on Grandmaster Zenith Yin's actions along the way.

Despite feeling annoyed, Grandmaster Zenith Yin spoke with a blank face, "It seems my ineptitude has attracted your ridicule. I have truly acquired two mutant fire serpents, but their skills are shallow. As their odds of success are low, I require Brother Man's and Brother Qing's assistance."

The old Confucian scholar's heart stirred and he hesitantly asked, "Assist you? Do we get any benefits?"

When Grandmaster Zenith Yin heard this, he revealed a slight smile, choosing to continue with voice transmission rather than speaking, "According to the information left behind by the Heavenvoid Hall's master, there are several top grade desolate antiquities left behind from ancient times. Their power should undoubtedly be unmatched. Apart from the Heavenvoid Cauldron and a Heavenmend Pill, how about we evenly split the other items?"

The old Confucian scholar's face flashed with greed, but after some consideration, he took a look at Man Huzi before replying with a voice transmission, "I have no problem with this, but it will depend on Brother Man. After all, without Brother Man to pin down Wan Tianming, I wouldn't be able to brave the risk."

Grandmaster Zenith Yin wasn't surprised to hear this. He knew that this old Confucian by the name of Layman Qing Yi was truly an old schemer. If he didn't draw in Man Huzi, this matter would

have no chance of success.

Thus, Grandmaster Zenith Yin turned his head to Man Huzi passed on his conditions to Man Huzi with a voice transmission, “Brother Man, what do you think of my proposal? Are you interested in cooperating? After all, Brother Man should clearly understand that I have no need for the Heavenmend Pill. It serves no other purpose I can think of apart from making up for the deficiency of five elements spiritual roots. Perhaps if Brother Man takes it, his cultivation will greatly progress and he’ll be able to breakthrough the limits of his lifespan!”

Grandmaster Zenith Yin seemed not to mind the unsightly expression he had just shown and spoke excitedly.

“Humph! From your plan to acquire the Heavenvoid Cauldron with two fire serpents, I see that your mind is muddled! An unknown number of Nascent Cultivators have already scoured these halls, but they all returned with disappointment. Do you believe that your plan is so likely to be successful that is it worth braving these great dangers? The danger of the inner halls is far greater than the outer halls. Even if we go in as Nascent Soul cultivators, there is no guarantee we will come out unscathed. Every successive opening of the Heavenvoid Hall doesn’t end with only one or two Nascent Soul cultivators disappearing.” Man Huzi snorted and spoke with derision.

“Brother Man need not worry about this. Just let me ask, if Wan Tianming truly strived for the Heavenvoid Cauldron wouldn’t Brother Man want to go and watch it?” Grandmaster Zenith Yin calmly asked.

Man Huzi's cold smile gradually disappeared after he heard Zenith Yin's question.

He narrowed his eyes and a cold glint flashed through his eyes before he slowly said, "If Wan Tianming truly wishes to brave the inner halls then I will travel with you without question. Even if our Devil Dao is incapable of obtaining the Heavenvoid Cauldron, we cannot allow it to fall into the hands of the Righteous Dao."

"Hehe, that's good. So long as Brother Man lends a hand when the time comes, my previous proposal will obviously hold. Naturally, if Lady Wen is willing to lend her assistance, she is more than welcome." Grandmaster Zenith Yin glanced at the beautiful woman with a slight smile.

"My purpose in coming here is to pick some spiritual herbs. The inner halls are too dangerous, so I will not be going." The beautiful woman surnamed Wen didn't bother to hear out his conditions and coldly declined.

A trace of disappointment flashed from Zenith Yin's eyes.

Although the beautiful woman was only at early Nascent Soul stage, her lord husband the Archsaint of the Six Paths was a towering, peerless figure amongst those that tread the Devil Dao. As he was unwilling to act shamefully in front of Man Huzi, he couldn't persistently ask her and could only wallow in his impotence.

However, he naturally didn't dare to force the woman along, even the Devil Dao looks down upon raping another cultivator's wife. All he could do was smile and drop the matter. After all, their group of three wasn't at a disadvantage against the Righteous Dao, and he was unwilling to offend the woman.

After the Devil Dao finished their discussions, Wan Tianming and the other two Righteous Dao cultivators continued openly meditating in silence. It was unknown whether they had finished their plans or if they had prepared countermeasures.

Han Li saw all of this while he was sitting in a corner.

Although he was quite far away and the majority of their speech was in sound transmissions, he could faintly guess from their occasionally malicious glances towards the Righteous Dao. They were likely discussing how to deal with the Sect Master of the Myriad Gates of Enlightenment and the others, much to Han Li's delight.

So long as the Nascent Soul cultivators were focused on each other, he could take advantage of the ensuing chaos to further ensure his safety. Best of all, Grandmaster Zenith Yin wouldn't be capable of attending to him!

As Han Li was thinking of what could possibly further increase the chaos, two white clothed old men appeared at the entrance of the hall. Their hair was silver, and their jackets were fluttering about, the exact image one would imagine of an Immortal.

As soon as the many cultivators saw the two and recognized them, their gazes revealed respect.

Their appearance had brought relief to a large portion of the cultivators in the room! As for the old eccentrics of the Devilish and Righteous Daos, they all revealed complicated expressions, containing envy, loathing, and even helplessness.

The old man with the friendlier appearance of the two smiled under the cultivators' many gazes and kindly said, "The reason why we didn't preside over this treasure hunt at the Heavenvoid Hall was because us two saints were in seclusion. But now, us two enforcement elders will be supervising this grand occasion on behalf of the Star Palace."

"The rules of this treasure hunt shall be the same as all the others. Those who casually bully the weak or kill others to seize their treasures will be stopped by us, and will be pursued and exterminated by our Star Palace. However, our supervision will be limited to the outer halls. We will neither enter the inner halls or be involved with any matters that take place there. Thus, if anyone feels uncertain, do not enter the inner halls. In addition, we will not assist any fellow Daoists with the dangers in the Heavenvoid Halls and will not bat an eye if you perish to them. With this, everyone should understand our intentions."

With that said, the white-clothed old man quickly swept their gazes past everyone in the hall like lightning. When the others felt their gaze upon them, they each turned their head away, but when Wan Tianming and Man Huzi felt their gaze sweep past them, they directly returned their gaze.

The white-clothed old man were initially startled before frowning. They couldn't help but mutter, "Why have these two eccentrics arrived? It seems that a bit of trouble is stirring."

The cold-faced old man at his side also had a change of expression, but after a sneer, his expression returned to normal.

Soon after, these two enforcement elders of the Star Palace sat down cross-legged at the sides of the entrance, not paying any attention to the uproar that had been caused by their words.

All of the other Core Formation cultivators had greatly varying expressions ranging from worry to joy.

When Han Li saw this, he couldn't help but find this odd. What did the Star Palace hope to gain by acting so benevolently? Could this be a display of the Star Palace's authority?

At that moment, he heard the voice of the Bone Sage, "Youngster, be careful. The Star Palace aren't flawlessly virtuous. To the best of my knowledge, when either the Devil Dao or the Righteous Dao obtains too much influence, the Star Palace would suppress the respective offender, denying either of the two sides from gaining too much power. In addition, every time the Heavenvoid Halls opens, quite a number of Righteous and Devil Dao cultivators die from mysterious causes, possibly from the machinations of the Star Palace. Although you don't belong to the Righteous or Devil Dao, you had best watch yourself. I don't wish for my plans to fail merely because I couldn't find another suitable

partner.”

Although the Bone Sage’s voice was indifferent, his words stirred great alarm in Han Li.

Chapter 436: Another Encounter With Fairy Violet Spirit

Without even the slightest deliberation, Han Li was completely certain that what the Bone Sage had said was true.

After all, for the Star Palace to tower over the Scattered Seas for so many years, they must've resorted to using at least a few tricks. They certainly hadn't come to supervise the Heavenvoid Hall today for an empty reason. They most likely held their own plans.

With that thought, Han Li's eyes coldly glinted. Although he didn't reply to the Bone Sage, he immediately became increasingly vigilant of the two white-clothed elders.

In the following moments, the two white-clothed old men sat still and sank into a state of Qi Refinement. Their eyes remained closed, and they didn't speak another word.

This strange atmosphere continued for three days. However, only four new cultivators arrived during that time. None of them were Nascent Soul cultivators.

Then, a sudden change occurred on the morning of the fourth day. A series of booms echoed throughout the hall. Without any warning, a white jade stone door descended, sealing off the entire hall.

The gate was covered in a layer of white mist, an obvious

indication of its formidable restrictions. Soon, there was a faint boom of palace gates closing from a distance far away.

A few cultivators in the hall couldn't help but express alarm. But after discovering that the Nascent Soul cultivators appeared calm, they felt relieved.

At that moment, the two white-clothed elders from the Star Palace calmly opened their eyes and stood up.

Suddenly, the other cultivators in the hall gazed at them with either confusion or realization. As for the Nascent Soul cultivators, they expressionlessly gazed at the two's actions in silence.

The two calmly walked towards the front of the hall.

But before they arrived, the end of the hall lightly trembled to soon reveal several stone slabs releasing a dazzling white radiance. Under everyone's amazed gazes, a three meter wide transportation formation had suddenly appeared.

Those among the many cultivators that had yet to see a transportation formation were awed at its appearance, leaving many arrogant cultivators in amazement.

The two white-clothed elders walked to the front of the transportation formation and bowed over it before carefully examining it.

A while later, the two glanced at each other and nodded.

“Alright, there are no problems with this transportation formation. You will arrive at the outer halls of the Heavenvoid Halls through this. Conduct yourselves well.” With that said, the white-clothed old men stepped into the transportation formation. With two flashes of white light, they disappeared without a trace.

Afterwards, the other cultivators in the hall unconsciously looked at each other in dismay.

But without waiting to see anyones reaction, Wan Tianming dropped down from the jade pillar with the old Daoist and the dark, thin old man, walking into the transportation formation without hesitation, disappearing with three flashes of white light.

By the time the others reacted, those that were relatively closeby rushed forwards.

Suddenly, the transportation formation started flashing without end. In the blink of an eye, nearly half of the cultivators in the hall had disappeared. The Sage of Bones suddenly stepped forward from the crowd.

Han Li's eyes flashed with a strange expression. He unconsciously turned his gaze towards Grandmaster Zenith Yin to discover that Grandmaster Zenith Yin was looking at him with an unknown intent. Greatly frightened, Han Li hastily turned his gaze away with great unrest in his heart.

It seemed that Grandmaster Zenith Yin wasn't about to let him go!

In his gloom, Han Li bluntly stood up and walked forward.

When Grandmaster Zenith Yin saw Han Li's actions, his mouth formed a strange sneer. This caused the nearby Wu Chou to break his silence, unable to restrain himself from asking, "Venerable Ancestor, you seemed to be greatly interested in that youngster. Is there something strange about him?"

Wu Chou felt truly curious.

"That person will prove extremely useful to me. I merely require a bit of his aid." Grandmaster Zenith Yin shook his head and spoke indifferently as if he was unwilling to inform Wu Chou.

Wu Chou, who had always received Zenith Yin's favor, felt quite puzzled.

At that moment, the Confucian-robed "Layman Qing Yi" lightly coughed and slowly said, "We should set off. There aren't many people left in the hall."

Zenith Yin paused for a moment before sweeping his gaze past the few cultivators left in the hall. He replied with a faint smile, "Naturally. If we don't leave soon, the transportation formation will disappear. It will only reappear again a month from now."

With that said, Zenith Yin turned into a black cloud and carried off Wu Chou with him.

When Layman Qing Yi and Man Huzi saw this, they leisurely flew off the jade pillar.

As for the beautiful woman, she had already jumped off. It appeared that she had no intention of mingling among their group.

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Once Han Li entered the transportation formation, he immediately appeared above a small, barren hill. After looking around, he couldn't help but be amazed. He only saw two men and woman not far away from him. There was no trace of any of the other cultivators.

When the female cultivator caught sight of Han Li, she revealed pleasant surprise.

Fairy Violet Spirit walked over to Han Li with a beaming smile. The male cultivator she was travelling with was transported to an unknown location. Han Li couldn't help but bitterly laugh at his terrible luck for having trouble placed on him.

As for the other two, one was a grey-clothed old man while the other was a masked man covered in black robes.

The old man plainly stood by while a dark green mist spiralled

around the black-robed man's body. It appeared the masked man was a Devil Dao cultivator. The two stood apart as if they found each other unpleasant to the eye.

Fairy Violet Spirit was now walking towards Han Li. This naturally aroused the two's attention and they couldn't help but size up Han Li.

The old man's gaze was friendly and he gave Han Li a kind smile. As for the black-robed man, his gaze was ice-cold and didn't hold the slightest emotion.

Han Li calmly returned their gaze without the slightest change in expression.

At that moment, Fairy Violet Spirit had already arrived in front of Han Li. She said with a slight smile, "I didn't expect to arrive together with Senior Han. It seems I will have to trouble Elder Han to watch over me for a bit. Otherwise, it would prove quite difficult for me to pass through this trial by myself."

With that said, Fairy Violet Spirit closed her lips, appearing somewhat embarrassed.

Han Li frowned and didn't immediately reply. After a moment of thought, he doubtfully asked, "Lady Violet Spirit's cultivation has made great strides. Congratulations on reaching late Foundation Establishment. But why has Fellow Daoist Violet Spirit come to this place? This place is truly dangerous. After all, even Core Formation cultivators would find it difficult to survive in the

Heavenvoid Hall.” Although Han Li had only an inkling of knowledge about the Heavenvoid Halls, he understood the severity of the dangers that lay within.

After hearing Han Li’s question, Fairy Violet Spirit’s beautiful face revealed a trace of bitterness. With a helpless tone, she said, “This woman also didn’t wish to come here. But as you see, I am currently in False Core Stage, and I want to attempt Core Formation as soon as possible. However, my own aptitude is poor. The supplementary medicine pills I was able to gather together are pathetically few. In fact, I had to pay a great price to purchase a Heavenvoid map fragment from someone else, so I could come here to test my luck. After all, I’ve heard that spiritual medicines are abundant in the Heavenvoid Hall. Perhaps the Heavens would watch over me and have me run across some spiritual medicines that hold great effects towards Core Formation. Besides, I’ve already made up my mind to only attempt this first trial! I will not attempt to go through with the second!”

Fairy Violent Spirit’s expression then grew dim, appearing to be in low spirits.

Han Li inwardly sighed and grew silent.

Had he not practiced the “Three Essence Revolutions Technique” and the “Great Development Technique” and possessed so many medicine pills that forcefully raised his odds of Core Formation, he suspected his own chances at Core Formation would’ve been even lower than Fairy Violet Spirit’s. With that thought, Han Li developed a feeling of empathy towards this fellow sufferer.

After some further thought, his Heaven Lightning Bamboo had come from her despite the conditions and her Exquisite Sound Sect does send him a certain amount of spirit stones every year. Although it wasn't much, he does owe her a favor. It would be best to take advantage of this situation to repay it!

With that in mind, Han Li's expression relaxed, and he said with an indifferent tone, "Since I can travel together with Fellow Daoist Violet Spirit, I can afford to offer some care. However, if I were to truly run into a helpless situation, Fairy Violet Spirit had best come up with her own plans for escape."

"Many thanks to Elder Han. Violet Spirit naturally understands how things stand. I definitely won't slow down Elder Han." Upon seeing Han Li agree, Fairy Violet Spirit's soft beauty flourished and her eyes became radiant, stunning Han Li.

Soon after, Han Li realized he had lost his self-control and hurriedly turned his head away. With a hot face, he didn't dare to further look at her.

Chapter 437: Weeping Soul Beast

This woman wasn't a peerless beauty, but that smile of hers was ravishingly beautiful and breathtaking to behold.

Han Li was shocked. Had his Great Development Technique reacted, Han Li would've written it off to a superior charming technique that she had used. But to great confusion, his uncharacteristic loss of control a moment ago had been entirely natural.

Han Li inwardly muttered to himself before taking another look at Fairy Violet Spirit. The young woman had already returned to her humble, charming appearance. Her previous dangerously enticing and breathtaking beauty had disappeared without a trace.

As Han Li felt doubt, the grey-clothed old man walked towards him.

“This one is Mount Heaven Island's Ge Li. May I know the names of you Fellow Daoists?” The old man cupped his hand with great politeness and greeted the two.

Han Li threw his doubts to the back of his mind for the time being and replied with a smile, “I am Han Li. This woman is the Exquisite Sound Sect's Fairy Violet Spirit.

The old man was calm upon hearing Han Li's name. But once he heard the words, ‘Exquisite Sound Sect’ and ‘Violet Spirit’, he couldn't help but be astonished.

“This old man has long heard of the great reputation of the Exquisite Sound Sect and Fairy Violet Spirit. I didn’t expect that I’d finally be able to see your true appearance. How fortuitous!” Although the old man said this, his eyes contained strong doubt. It was clear that the old man was surprised by how much her appearance differed from the reputation of her great beauty.

Fairy Violet Spirit also saw this and merely smiled in silence.

However, the old man wasn’t an ordinary person. His expression quickly returned to normal, before speaking to Han Li with a smile, “Since we’ve arrived here together through the transportation formation, it could be considered fate. Would it not be better to travel together and combine our strength for this journey? After all, the Vengeful Ghost Haunt won’t be easy to traverse. I heard that many Core Formation cultivators have been devoured by the ghosts of this trial, leaving not even their bones behind.

When Ge Li said that last phrase, his expression unconsciously grew serious as if he knew much about the Heavenvoid Hall.

When Han Li heard him say “Vengeful Ghost Haunt”, he turned his gaze towards the distance.

About forty meters away from their small dirt cliff, he saw only an ocean of grey mist that appeared to be endless. There were gusts of evil winds blowing from the mists, faintly carrying ghostly wails and shrieks. Those that heard it felt their hearts unconsciously

tremble.

The ghost fog was firmly blocked from approaching the hill by a layer of faint white light that was surrounding it. Were this not the case, Han Li and the others would be too busy dealing with the feral ghosts and lonely souls brought by the mist to have such a leisurely chat.

After seeing this, Han Li raised his head and looked upwards. The rolling fog seemed to conceal something, but Han Li felt some disbelief as it didn't resemble the main hall in the least. It was more like a desolate countryside.

At that moment, Fairy Violet Spirit interjected herself into the conversation and spoke with deep worry, "I also heard that this first trial, the Vengeful Ghost Haunt, was originally not that difficult. But as an increasing number of cultivators fell to the ghost fog, it has become increasingly dangerous in turn. The heavy resentment carried by those fallen cultivators has transformed them into powerful malicious souls after death. They hold great envious hate towards us cultivators who challenge the halls. They are relentless and won't stop their pursuit until their quarry is dead, resulting in many cultivators' deaths in this trial whenever the Heavenvoid Hall opens. In addition, I heard that in the previous opening of the Heavenvoid Hall, a group of cultivators in the Vengeful Ghost Haunt spotted a fully sentient ghost king. As a result, the entire group perished save for one."

"Ghost king?" Han Li stroked his chin and revealed slight surprise.

Although he didn't fully understand the cultivation differences amongst ghosts, he knew that ghost king ranked malicious spirits were equivalent to late Core Formation cultivators. The addition of its intelligence only made this enemy even more troublesome.

Seeing that Han Li was still wearing a contemplative expression, Ge Li continued, "Although there isn't a large chance of encountering this ghost king, it would be safer to travel together. I may be old, but I still do not wish to fall here and join the ghost fog as a malicious spirit." This old man was quite blunt.

When Fairy Violet Spirit heard this, she stayed silent. As she was very intelligent, she understood that he did not raise the proposal of cooperation because she was a Foundation Establishment cultivator. He was directing the offer to Han Li. As such, after her interjection, she obediently stood by Han Li's side without another word.

Han Li smiled at the old man. He didn't immediately answer him and instead turned his gaze towards the black robed man, calmly asking him, "Fellow Daoist Ge isn't going to ask that brother? Is he not willing to cooperate?"

When Han Li mentioned the black-robed man, Ge Li's face immediately became unsightly. But after a moment of hesitation, he resentfully snorted, "Humph! Don't talk about that Devilish Daoist. When I finished my teleportation, I amiably raised the topic of cooperation with him only to be told to get lost! If this old man's temperament wasn't kindly, I definitely wouldn't have left him be." The old man revealed great anger after he said this.

Han Li remained silent and felt some interest towards this black-robed man.

He turned his head towards the Devil Dao cultivator and shouted, “Is Fellow Daoist interested in collaborating towards a common goal? If we join hands, we may stand a chance against the ghost king rank demon if we were to encounter it!” Han Li’s voice wasn’t loud, but it was heard with full clarity.

But after hearing him, he merely glanced at them with a cold expression before indifferently turning his head away, ignoring Han Li’s suggestion.

“Fellow Daoist Han, I didn’t speak wrongly. That person doesn’t know what’s good for him. Let us three set off!” The old man coldly snorted towards the black-robed man. It seemed he was quite insulted by the previous rejection and had taken it to heart.

Han Li faintly smiled, but before he could say something, Fairy Violet Spirit shouted out in surprise.

Han Li followed her gaze and saw the black-robed man step towards the ghost fog as if wanting the challenge the trial alone.

Han LI and the other two looked on in amazement. But soon after, Ge Li sneered disdainful, “This person truly wishes to bring about his own destruction! Daring to charge through the ghost fog will most likely be met with failure.”

Han Li paid no notice to the old man's mocking ridicule and stared at the black-robed man's every movement with narrowed eyes. He believed that the the man wasn't suicidal, but that he held complete confidence in a particular method that he possessed.

The black-robed man walked to the boundary between the white light barrier and the ghost fog and calmly lifted his sleeve. A ray of green light shot out and landed in front of him. It was a delicate spirit beast that appeared similar to a monkey.

This small monkey was only about a foot tall with faintly glowing dark green fur. Most notably, its nose was bulging to an unusually large size as if it took up an entire half of its height. It appeared truly bizarre.

Han Li was astonished by its appearance, but he didn't react. When the old man at his side saw this, he yelled with a greatly changed expression.

"It's a Weeping Soul! He actually had such a spirit beast. No wonder he was so arrogant." The old man revealed slight shock. Fairy Violet Spirit had a similar expression upon seeing the small monkey.

Han Li frowned and asked, "Weeping Soul Beast? What kind of strange beast is it? Why have I never heard of it before?"

Han Li's words brought Fairy Violet Spirit back to her senses. She then hastily gave Han Li an explanation, "The Weeping Soul Beast isn't a spirit beast that naturally comes into this world. It is a

living being refined by a secret Devil Dao Sect from a spirit beast and a demonic soul. Although it normally doesn't have much use, it has an innate ability to consume ghosts and souls. Regardless of whether they are demonic ghosts or malicious souls, they will be absorbed with a light sniff of its nose. After being contained for a short time, it will be refined into nothingness. They are truly formidable." Fairy Violet Spirit spoke with admiration.

"However..." Fairy Violet Spirit's tone changed, and she softly sighed.

"What is it?" Han Li was annoyed by her sudden stop.

As Ge Li gazed at the black-robed man's disappearing figure, he said with a complicated expression, "However, this beast's refinement technique is possessed solely by that secret sect. This heaven disrupting evil art is bloody and has a high chance of failure. It is said that the beast appears only in times of great strife in the cultivation world."

"Great strife in the cultivation world whenever it is seen?" Han Li couldn't help but sneer. Han Li scoffed and said, "Even if the beast weren't seen, the Scattered Star Seas will experience chaos regardless. Do you really believe that this beast could bring about disaster?"

Chapter 438: Remains In The Ghost Fog

Although Han Li walked the path of Immortality, he didn't hold the slightest belief in destiny or fate. In his view, Immortal cultivation was merely a method of pursuing eternal life. If any true immortals were to appear before him, he would show great reverence, but he wouldn't become absolutely subservient to them.

Fairy Violet Spirit and Ge Li were stunned in response to Han Li's blunt words, before revealing embarrassment.

To tell the truth, it wasn't only Han Li who thought this. A majority of cultivators merely treated this "Weeping Soul Beast" as a rumor. Under these circumstances, who wouldn't directly dismiss this like Han Li did? After all, topics relating to destiny and heavenly law only existed in their heart.

At that moment, the black-robed man had gone deeper into the ghost fog with the Weeping Soul Beast and had completely disappeared from sight.

After glancing into the ghost fog, Han Li formed a faint smile and said, "Let us go! Since there was someone willing to scout the path, we shouldn't be so disrespectful."

"What does Fellow Daoist Han mean?" The old man Ge Li didn't seem to fully understand Han Li. Of course, he did understand what Han Li meant and would've also done this if Han Li hadn't agreed to cooperate with him. However, he viewed the black-robed man with contempt. To now take advantage of his lead in front of

the other two was truly quite a loss of face. As such, he could only assume an appearance of confusion and have Han Li take the initiative to mention it.

When Han Li heard the old man's words, he gave him a mysterious smile. He then wordlessly took the lead and walked in the direction that the black robed man had disappeared in. Naturally, Fairy Violet Spirit closely followed after him without any hesitation.

Ge Li was initially stunned upon seeing them. But he soon followed after them with a red face.

Once the light grey ghost fog felt living people walk into it, it flared up as if it were alive and started rolling towards the three.

If common mortals were to be plagued by this grey mist, their blood essence would be immediately drained, turning them into dried up corpses. In addition, their souls would then become a part of the ghost fog and they would be unable to free themselves from their fates as ghosts. However, as Han Li and the other two were cultivators, they had no fear of this trifling ghost fog.

With flickers of radiance, each of their bodies were enveloped by their own methods of protection.

Ge Li raised his hand and released a small, fire-red umbrella. It swivelled about three meters above his head and enveloped the old man in a red beam of light. When the ghost fog touched this red light, threads of strange azure smoke were released with a puff,

followed by ghostly wails. When the ghost fog saw this, it only dared to appear menacingly before the red light and no longer approached it as if it was intelligent.

Fairy Violet Spirit released four fist-sized balls that spiralled around her body, creating a three meter wide moving boundary. The boundary was a white, sparkling square that would repel the ghost fog's slightest approach towards Fairy Violet Spirit.

However, the most strange defensive method was Han Li's. Apart from a layer of lithe azure light emitting from his body, he didn't take out any magic tools or treasures. When the ghost fog neared Han Li's body, several arcs of light shot out without explanation, turning the mist into fading smoke.

This strange scene astonished the other two, but neither of them were willing to take the initiative to rudely ask.

During her musings, Fairy Violet Spirit seemed to faintly recall the Heaven Lightning Bamboo, but still felt uncertain.

Han Li walked at the very front as if he were unaware of their attention. However, this wasn't because he sought to be some hero, but rather that the ghost fog filled the entire area. Since there would be no difference if he walked at the very back, he may as well walk at the front and get a better grasp of any incoming danger.

As for the lightning, it was merely a result of using the Bamboo Cloudswarm Swords' Qi to protect his body. By using the

protective sword barrier divine ability of his Azure Essence Sword Arts, he was able to draw on his flying sword's might without releasing his magic treasures. This was a technique Han Li had only recently comprehended. With the Gold Lightning Bamboo's devilbane properties, this ghost fog posed no threat.

Of course, Han Li didn't display the entire might of the Gold Lightning Bamboo, causing the arcs of lightning to be a faint white. As such, he didn't have to fear others recognizing the Gold Lightning Bamboo. In addition, he had also released his immensely powerful spiritual sense since he had entered the ghost fog to warn him of any lurking dangers from ghosts. After all, they couldn't see through the dense ghost fog with only their eyes.

However, the tracks of the black-robed man were exceptionally easy to follow. He left behind a three-meter-wide trail of far thinner fog. It was so obvious, they could follow after it with their eyesight alone.

While it was unknown whether this was caused by the black-robed man's technique or the "Weeping Soul Beast", Han Li didn't care in the slightest. He just didn't feel like thinking about it.

The more ferocious this Weeping Soul Beast was, the more beneficial it was for them while following after it.

As he expressionlessly watched his surroundings, he took careful steps forward due to the exceptionally bumpy terrain. He also felt a dampness at his feet as if the air was extremely humid.

Thus, they continued walking for an unknown amount of time without encountering any mishaps. But as they unwittingly followed after the black-robed man in the ghost fog, the color of the ghost fog gradually turned black.

As this went on, Han Li's expression gradually became gloomier before he started to frown.

With a large crack, Han Li suddenly stopped and lowered his head. Fairy Violet Spirit and the old man curiously walked forward to see what had happened.

Han Li narrowed his eyes but his expression soon returned to normal. He had merely stepped on a pile of bones. The bones were wearing clothing that was surrounded in a layer of azure light, appearing quite unordinary. At its side, there were shattered fragments of a sword. From its incisive luster, it seemed as if it still possessed a spiritual nature.

It was a cultivator that had fallen here. A flicker of emotion shined from Han Li's eyes as he shook his head.

With the magic treasure fragments still holding spirit so many years after their death, this cultivator must've had an impressive cultivation. But this person's body being left unattended after death was truly vastly different than the grandeur they had held during life. It was truly pitiful! If those who tread the path of Immortality aren't careful, they would be eternally doomed to a miserable end.

As for this cultivator's soul, it should've become a portion of the ghost fog or turned into a malicious spirit. It would be quite difficult for it to enter the path of reincarnation.

As Han Li lamented, he casually turned his gaze to the other two.

Fairy Violet Spirit's face had turned pale, but when she saw Han Li look at her, she forced out a smile.

Ge Li's expression was quite odd. He gazed at the azure clothes for a long while with a creased brow before suddenly flicking his finger and throwing an egg-sized fireball at the remains. Upon contacting the remains, the fireball was extinguished with a flash.

"Sigh, it really is him!" Ge Li raised his head and muttered to himself with a sad expression.

"Does Fellow Daoist Ge recognize him?" Han Li indifferently asked as he looked at the skeleton with raised eyebrows.

Fairy Violet Spirit also displayed great curiosity.

"This person should be Daoist Master Yu, who I had met several times before. He had entered Core Formation far earlier than I had. His Fire Repulsing Robes were refined from hundred year ice silk so common flames would have no effect on it, and it was somewhat well known. I had heard he entered the Heavenvoid Halls the last time it had opened, but he had never returned. I didn't expect that he had fallen here, unfortunate enough to not

even pass the first trial!” Ge Li let out a long sigh.

Han Li was silent for a while before suddenly asking a question that left the old man shocked, “Was the cultivation and magic treasure of Daoist Master Yu far greater than yours?”

Ge Li seemed to understand what Han Li meant and twirled his beard for a moment before speaking with certainty, “Although Daoist Master Yu was an early Core Formation cultivator such as myself, at the time it was said he was about to breakthrough to mid Core Formation. As such, his magic power should be far greater than my own. In addition, he possessed rarely seen ice attribute mutated spiritual roots. His ice cultivation arts should be far superior to my own. As for his magic treasure, I hadn’t seen it used in a fight so I have no way of knowing, but it shouldn’t have been any weaker than mine.” As the old man spoke, his expression became increasingly unsightly.

“Since its like that, then there must be a formidable enemy nearby. I had originally felt it quite odd that since we’ve followed the Weeping Soul Beast’s path, we hadn’t encountered any ghosts or malicious spirits apart from the ghost fog. It seems that we can’t expect the black-robed man to always clear the way on our behalf.” Han Li said with a solemn expression.

Chapter 439: Ghost King (1)

When Fairy Violet Spirit heard Han Li, her face paled in an instant.

The old man looked at the white bones in silence with shifting eyes. It was unknown what he was thinking about.

Han Li looked around and indifferently concluded, “Since a cultivator on the verge of mid Core Formation had fallen here, a fierce ghost with fearsome cultivation is certain to be nearby. Are Lady Violet Spirit and Fellow Daoist Ge prepared for the possibility of falling here? If you two turn back now, you won’t have to brave this danger. I’m going either way, with or without you!”

When the two heard Han Li’s calm voice, they couldn’t help but look at each other in dismay.

A while later, Fairy Violet Spirit came to a decision after some thought and resolutely said, “Senior Han! Even if I were to fall and become a ghost, I cannot return unless I have a way to reach Core Formation.” Her voice revealed great determination.

When Han Li heard this, he mentally sighed with reluctant acceptance and turned to look at the old man.

Ge Li’s expression was continuously changing.

After a long while, he dejectedly said, “I came here in hopes of

acquiring a few life extending fruits, but I don't wish to risk my life to acquire them. Since the danger is great, this old man will have to turn back. After all, peacefully dying in meditation would be far better than spending eternity as a ghost.

After that was said, the old man revealed a trace of shame. Soon after, he cupped his hands to the two and turned back without hesitation.

Han Li expressionlessly gazed in the direction that the old man disappeared in and remained silent for a long while.

Fairy Violet Spirit appeared disappointed. With one less Core Formation cultivator in her party, the ghost mist had become far more dangerous.

“Elder Han, should we not continue?” Fairy Violet looked at the dense fog around her and spoke to Han Li with a forced smile. Although her previous words were resolute, she had no idea whether or not she had made the correct choice. Her mind was now perturbed.

“Yea.” With a flat agreement, he lowered his head to look at the skeleton.

With a swipe of his hand, the Fire Repulsing Robes disappeared into his storage pouch.

Fairy Violet Spirit revealed a trace of amazement and was about

to say something. But after some further thought, she decided to remain silent. Han Li's following actions surprised the woman even more.

Han Li flicked his finger and released a ray of azure swordlight, striking open a three meter large hole into the nearby ground. Then with a sweep of his sleeve, the bones and the magic treasure fragments fell into the hole before being buried.

Fairy Violet Spirit's expression became quite odd upon seeing this.

Han Li suddenly turned his head to look at her and calmly asked, "Are my actions strange?"

After some hesitation, she truthfully said, "Somewhat."

Han Li gently smiled and unhurriedly said, "I buried him merely because I felt that as a fellow cultivator, there will come a time where I will unknowingly fall and become a pile of bones. Since I've come across someone else's, I may as well lend a hand. I hope that when I fall to misfortune, there will also be someone that will come across my body and bury me. As for his refined robes, the dead have no use for such objects. It would be far too great a pity if they were to be buried. I may as well regard them as compensation for burying the body!"

Fairy Violet Spirit's amazement faded away before she started to murmur to herself.

At that moment, Han Li started to continue his path forward.

When Fairy Violet Spirit saw this, she looked at the new burial mound and sighed before slowly following after him.

“Fellow Daoist Violet Spirit, how much do you know about the history of the Heavenvoid hall? Could you tell me about it?” As Han Li had waited for her, they were now leisurely walking side by side.

She felt a slightly complicated emotion from seeing Han Li’s calm expression. He was only an early Core formation cultivator yet he still appeared so calm in such a dangerous area. How truly unexpected. However, this had also greatly calmed her heart as she felt that Han Li could be relied upon.

Han Li’s question had startled her for a moment before she obediently replied, “The Heavenvoid Hall has existed in the Scattered Star Seas for countless years. It is only known to open every three hundred years. It will randomly descend at some remote, deserted location in the Scattered Star Seas and is filled with many treasures. Regardless of whether it be spirit medicines, cultivation techniques, or ancient treasures, all can be found here as a result of cultivators from the desolate era building this mysterious hall for unknown reasons. Thus, whenever the hall is opened, many high grade cultivators would come here in search of treasures.”

“However, the Heavenvoid Hall’s mechanisms are densely layered in formation spells. As one grows closer to the core of the inner halls, the more treasures one encounters but the greater the

danger. It is said that the items in the inner hall are the Heavenvoid Hall's true treasures. However, to come across them, one must pass through three great trials. Otherwise, there will be no chance of arriving there. Apart from Nascent Soul cultivators, only a small number of fortunate cultivators are able to pass through without injury. As a result, the inner halls have become a great mystery towards ordinary cultivators.

As Fairy Violet Spirit spoke with her beautiful voice, she carefully watched Han Li's expression. However, she was slightly disappointed to see that Han Li's expression didn't change, causing her to feel that Han Li was somewhat unfathomable.

"While the Heavenvoid Hall has many treasures, shouldn't there be fewer with each opening?" Han Li indifferently asked.

"That is quite unclear, but the Heavenvoid Hall is opened for only a finite time. Each of its treasures conceal countless secrets. Not a single treasure is a simple item, and their numbers remain many! It is said that anyone that acquires one or two treasures from here are considered quite fortunate. Normally, cultivators end up only picking a few common spiritual herbs. It depends quite a bit on one's own luck. If there were not the case, the inner halls would've long been swept clean by Nascent Soul cultivators." Fairy Violet Spirit spoke with uncertainty.

Han Li nodded with a stirred expression and remained silent. He slightly hastened his steps.

The two continued to follow the black-robed man's trail. After walking for the time it took to finish a meal, nothing strange had

occurred. Fairy Violet Spirit had somewhat relaxed as a result. She had come to think that these malicious spirits had traveled a different path than their own, resulting in a lack of encounters.

As these thoughts bloomed in Fairy Violet Spirit's mind, Han Li frowned, and he came to an abrupt stop.

Fairy Violet Spirit was suddenly alarmed and also stood still. She asked with worry, "What's wrong?" Soon after, she swept her spiritual sense past the nearby area, but she found nothing.

With a strange expression flickering through his eyes, Han Li coldly said, "That black-robed man encountered the demon ghost. They are currently fighting."

After some hesitation, Fairy Violet Spirit said, "What will we do? Should we go help, or should we take advantage of the opportunity and slip past them?"

Han Li looked at the woman and knew that she most likely preferred the latter choice, wanting to slip past them. This choice couldn't be considered incorrect. If they weren't in the middle of the ghost mist, Han Li would've done the same without a second thought.

But now....

Han Li shook his head and sighed before walking forward in large strides.

When Fairy Violet Fairy saw this, she was stunned for a moment. After some slight consideration, she decided to follow after him.

As she followed a hundred meters behind him, she faintly heard the sounds of explosions caused from magic techniques and soft sobs. The voice seemed to be that of a woman. Her voice was muffled, shrieking, and seemed to be on the verge of breaking, causing those who heard it to feel extremely on edge and restless.

Although she could only faintly hear it, she felt anxious and greatly desired to run away. Fairy Violet Spirit was startled to have felt this and used a technique to stabilize her primal soul before daring to wipe away the cold sweat on her chin and raise her head.

By the time she looked up, she could no longer see Han Li.

Fairy Violet Spirit hesitated for a moment before clenching her teeth and walked forward with a solemn expression. After travelling for a short distance, she unexpectedly caught sight of Han Li's solemn silhouette standing still with his hands behind his back.

The woman felt delighted and hastily ran over to him. But before she neared him, she suddenly heard a loud ghostly sob that left her dazed. Her limbs began frantically waving around without any control.

The woman's terror drained the blood from her face!

Chapter 440: Ghost King (2)

“Ghostly Soul Snare!”

Fairy Violet Spirit instantly recognized the ghost technique she was suffering from.

This magic technique was innate to high grade demon ghosts and was used to attack weaker enemies. Enemies of lower cultivation would have their blood run rampant, and they would madly dance about without any control of their limbs. What a fearsome damaging Yin ghost technique!

When she had originally heard the sound, she had regarded it as a common ghost’s howl and was now paying the price. Fairy Violet Spirit felt terrified upon seeing her body wildly flutter towards the ghost’s sobs.

“Tai!” At that moment, she heard a man’s voice. Although the voice wasn’t loud, she felt her heart and soul tremble, causing her to collapse onto the floor with weakened legs.

She soon discovered with delight that she had regained control of her body. Her heart relaxed and she looked in front of her with a grateful expression where Han Li, the source of the voice, stood.

“Fellow Daoist Violet Spirit! Use your cultivation to guard your mind! You were careless, but you cannot allow the ghost wail to take advantage of your distraction.” The woman heard Han Li’s calm voice in her ear.

“Yes,” Fairy Violet Spirit blushed and softly replied. She then stood from the floor with slight embarrassment and walked towards Han Li with a guarded mind.

When she arrived behind Han Li, she unexpectedly discovered that Han Li stood motionlessly in place and was staring forwards. She followed Han Li’s gaze to witness a scene that tensed her heart.

In the ghost mist not far away, a thick black fog roiled without end. Flashes of red and green light would occasionally shine through along with sounds of muffled explosions along with the ghost sobs that had embarrassed her.

Within the black fog, the black-robed devilish cultivator was controlling a strange, fire-red hammer that spouted out countless blue flames. The flames were currently fighting against an indistinct ghostly shadow. The ghostly shadow was surrounded in fog and was controlling a thumb-sized green pearl that released a pitch-black, profound Yin Qi. The black-robed man was trapped within the green pearl’s black Qi and appeared to be at a great disadvantage.

As for the Weeping Soul Beast that was capable of consuming souls and beasts, it was tangling with two ghostly silhouettes covered in green fur.

Apart from their pointed heads and the several-inch-long white bone prongs held in each of their hands, they appeared exactly the same as ordinary green furred jiangshi. At that moment, their

white bone prongs spouted out a stream of green flame wisps towards the Weeping Soul Beast.

In response, the Weeping Soul Beast spurt out a yellow glowing light from its nose that violently collided with the flame wisps. After being wrapped by its glow, the wisps of flame were completely absorbed into its nose.

At first glance, the Weeping Soul Beast had the advantage because the green furred monsters were merely attacking from a distance with the flame wisps and they didn't dare to approach the beast as if they were fearful of its yellow glowing light. But in reality, the Weeping Soul Beast was being tied down by the monsters and was unable to assist the black-robed man.

“Nightfiend Ghosts!” Upon seeing the two green furred monsters, Fairy Violet Spirit took a breath of cold air.

Han Li's heart stirred. Without turning his head around, he asked, “What? Does Fellow Daoist Violet Spirit recognize what those are?”

“It should be correct. Although this is the first time I've seen them, they appear exactly the same as described. They are a particularly rare type of [Jiangshi](#) that are able to travel underneath the sun. It is no wonder they dare to brave the Weeping Ghost Beast's power. As they have physical bodies, they are able to suppress the beast so long as they distance themselves from the Weeping Soul Beast's soul absorbing light. After all, the Weeping Soul Beast seems lacking in skills. It probably doesn't have anything apart from its soul absorbing light.”

The chinese hybrid of a vampire and a zombie. It was normally described to move by hopping

After Han Li heard this, his face displayed no abnormalities, but he let out a long mental sigh. This woman's cultivation wasn't high, but her knowledge was far greater than that of a rogue cultivator like himself. Despite having read through many records during his days at Yellow Maple Valley, he didn't possess the qualifications to read through the truly valuable secret information as his cultivation was too low.

As for when he arrived in the Scattered Star Seas, he had purchased many records but the information hadn't filtered or organized by a sect. If the records weren't duplicates, then they missed a great amount of information. He normally wouldn't look at them. But during this crucial moment, his own knowledge was shown to be lacking. If he made it out of here alive, it seemed he would have to pay a visit to the Exquisite Sound Sect and look through their records. It was unlikely they would reject an Elder of their own sect!

As Han Li thought this, a change had occurred. The blue flames of the fire-red hammer had been completely enveloped by the black Qi of the ghost shadow's green pearl. Seeing that his own flames had been extinguished, the black-robed man revealed furious alarm in the face of imminent crisis.

He had believed that by relying on the might of the Weeping Soul Beast that he'd be able to easily charge through this first trial, the Vengeful Ghost Haunt. As a result, he had refused the others' invitations. But he hadn't expect to come across a profound malicious spirit with such skill and had comprehended all sorts of attrition techniques. It had even taken advantage of a moment of

carelessness to separate him from his Weeping Soul Beast, leaving him in a dangerous position.

Unfortunately, apart from being able to refine a Weeping Soul Beast and comprehending a few peculiar techniques, the disciples of his sect possessed no outstanding abilities for confronting enemies. He could only stare on helplessly as he watched the splendor and might of his devilfire hammer weaken along with his will.

Once he thought of the fearful consequences of falling in this place, the black-robed man's heart grew ice-cold, and he became stricken with panic.

At that moment, Han Li hurriedly approached as if he were going to seize this opportunity to save the black-robed man's life. However, the proud black-robed man's delight soon turned into an anger so intense that he could spit out blood.

When Han Li saw that he would also be placed in a dangerous situation, he didn't have any intention of helping. Instead, he watched their battle from a distance with great indifference. The black-robed man couldn't help but grind his teeth from the deep hatred he felt towards Han Li during that moment.

Soon after, Fairy Violet Spirit had rushed over. As she watched the black-robed man bitterly fight against the ghost demon, Fairy Violet Spirit was flabbergasted as to why Han Li wasn't assisting him. Could it be because of the black-robed man's earlier attitude that he deliberately wanted to watch him die?

Since she felt that Han Li wasn't such a short-sighted man, she became increasingly puzzled. Because Han Li had just saved her life, she found it improper to voice any of her suspicions and could only silently watch the black-robed man fight the ghost shadow.

But at that moment, the black-robed man was unable to further endure. His flying hammer was engulfed in the Yin Qi, completely extinguishing its devil flame and leaving it firmly trapped in mid-air. The black ghost shadow shrieked and transformed into a black streak of light before shooting towards the black-robed man's heart.

Although the devilish cultivator's expression were hidden by his clothes, it appeared as if he was standing still and waiting for his death with eyes closed.

The black-robed man clearly understood that although his body's exterior was protected by defensive magic techniques, it would prove to be little more than paper to the malicious soul. His hammer could block it, but it had already been seized by the enemy, and his remaining protections could be easily broken though. Now, all he could do was wait for his death.

During this time of crisis, Han Li, who had been indifferently watching from the side, suddenly acted without the slightest warning.

With a wave of his hand, five streaks of slender azure sword Qi shot out, arriving at the black shadow's vitals in the blink of an

eye.

If the black shadow were to ignore them and solely focus on killing the black-robed man, it would succeed. But in turn, its crystal core had a high likelihood of being shattered by the streaks of sword Qi.

The black shadow naturally didn't follow through with such a disadvantageous action. Its body blurred several times before returning to its original location. Its eyes stared at Han Li with an intense green radiance without the slightest glimmer of emotion.

Han Li's eyes flickered with a strange light upon seeing this. With a flip of his hand, he took out a small, exquisite spirit beast pouch.

He didn't immediately release the pouch. With his other hand, he shot over ten azure lights towards the two green-furred nightfiends.

The two ghosts had quick reflexes. Having seen that Han Li launched a surprise attack at them, their bodies blurred several times, fading away into two wisps of smoke. A short moment later, they reappeared at the ghost shadow's side. They vengefully bared their fangs at Han Li, revealing their mouths full of sharp, black and yellow teeth.

Taking advantage of the ghost shadow's shift in attention, the black robed cultivator gambled the entirety of his magic power to seize back control of his magic treasure. In the next instant, he felt

great delight and had it fly back towards him in a streak of red-light.

At that moment, Han Li's face froze and he loudly shouted, "Careful! There are other ghosts!"

The black-robed man was startled. In that very moment, a nearly incorporeal grey silhouette shot out from the other side of the ghost mist, arriving in front of the black-robed man in an instant.

The black-robed man's eyes were filled with fear. It was too late for him to dodge!

Chapter 441: Ghost King (3)

When the grey silhouette was about to pierce through the black-robed man's body, a brilliant white radiance flashed between them. The grey shadow quickly withdrew with a shout as if it were greatly afraid of the white light.

The black-robed man whose life was spared remained stunned for a short moment before feeling delighted surprise. He instantly turned his gaze towards a flashing red light that appeared by Han Li's side.

Han Li looked at the black-robed man with amazement. He had clearly seen a white light flicker like the blur of a huge diving bird, scaring off the grey shadow. Han Li was quite curious about it.

The black-robed man still appeared unsightly. As he had just narrowly escaped death, he still felt great lingering fear. He felt great regret at having ignored the words of others and so rashly came to the Heavenvoid Hall.

But when he thought of the white light that had just saved him, he seemed to have thought of something and hastily reached into his robes, taking out a copper mirror stained from age.

Han Li glanced at the item with marvel.

The shape of the mirror was peculiar, and its spiritual Qi was concealed, could it be an ancient treasure?

As Han Li pondered this, he heard an abrupt shatter.

The ancient mirror had split into eight pieces without the slightest warning. The spiritual Qi that it contained scattered without a trace, turning it into mere scraps.

When the black-robed man saw this, his eyes were filled with regret. He sighed and put away the shattered copper mirror.

He then raised his head and watched as Han Li approached. He couldn't help but recall how Han Li had deliberately refused to aid him at the beginning and coldly snorted before turning his gaze once more.

The black-robed man's actions stunned Han Li. But soon after, he seemed to have realized something and silently smiled with understanding before turning his gaze towards the ghosts.

Fairy Violet Spirit also looked at the black-robed man and revealed a thoughtful expression.

At that moment, the Weeping Soul Beast had already rushed over to them. It climbed up on the black-robed man's shoulder and motionlessly sat there. It appeared quite clever.

The grey ghost shadow reappeared at the side of the black ghost shadow. With many poofs, eight identically shaped demon ghosts appeared from around the mist.

Han Li recognized these ghosts from a glance. They were fierce ghosts known as Weiwu.

Normally, whenever one appeared, it would cause a great uproar. An unexpected sighting of such a large group of them caused Han Li's expression to sink.

They were horned and sharply clawed. Although they were far inferior to those ghost shadows, they were still superior to late Foundation Establishment cultivators. They were slowly crouching forward towards them with cold gazes and were surrounding the three cultivators.

From this, Han Li knew that a hard fought battle was unavoidable. He bluntly gave his commands, "You two deal with the Weiwu Ghosts. I will go and deal with the two ghost shadows. Delay them!"

Han Li's voice was deep and solemn. Although the black-robed man felt resentment towards Han Li, he also knew that the situation was grave and could only begrudgingly follow Han Li's orders.

After all, he already recognized that he was unable to combat the two ghost shadows. Han Li taking the initiative to confront them was exactly what he had wanted.

The vicious ghosts revealed an ominous gaze. When Han Li saw this, he instantly released the Spirit Beast Pouch that he held in his

hand. A glistening cloud of gold and silver light suddenly appeared in midair.

At that moment, the demon ghosts seemed to have received an order and viciously pounced at the three while breathing out wisps of black flame. Without any hesitation, the black-robed man and Fairy Violet Spirit released their magic treasures and tools to block them.

The Weeping Soul Beast was particularly impressive. A glowing light shot from its nose and dragged a nearby demon ghost into his stomach. However, that was all it could do before the two green furred nightfiends used their bone prongs to once again tie it down.

Han Li didn't pay attention to any of the Weiwu Ghosts. He shot towards the two ghost shadows in the distance as a streak of azure light. The cloud of droning Gold Devouring Beetles were closely following after him.

When the black ghost shadow saw Han Li take the initiative to approach them, its black eyes flashed with green light. It then opened its mouth and released a green sparkling pearl towards him. As for the grey shadow next to it, after several blurs, it disappeared from sight.

Han Li frowned and expressionlessly stopped in place. With a flick of his finger, two Bamboo Cloudswarm Swords flew to intercept the green pearl as azure streaks of light.

Simultaneously, he commanded his droning Gold Devouring Beetles to scatter around him and to float in place.

Bang! The two streaks of azure light were exchanging blows with the green pearl. The ghost pearl released a large cloud of profound Yin Qi in an attempt to bind and seal the two flying swords within it.

Cold light flashed from Han Li's eyes. Forming a sword incantation gesture with his hands, the two flying swords grew several times in size, transforming into two ten-meter-long azure flood dragons. With a flamboyant flourish, they broke through the black Yin Qi encirclement and fiercely charged towards the green ghost pearl.

The ghost shadow's originally icy expression revealed a trace of surprise.

Although the green ghost pearl was once the protective magic treasure of a fallen cultivator, it was rather average. But after the demon ghost had acquired it and tempered it for several hundred years with profound Yin Qi, it had long since become marvelously refined into a magic treasure of particularly damaging profound Yin Qi. So long as a magic treasure was bound by its Qi, it would be continuously sealed and incapable of escaping.

But for some unknown reason, Han Li's flying swords showed no fear towards being entangled by the profound Yin Qi. After transforming into azure flood dragons, the swords tore apart the profound Yin Qi, not allowing it to approach their main bodies.

When the ghost shadow saw this, it couldn't help but become fearful. During its several hundred years of sentience, it had never come across such a scene.

After a moment of hesitation, it suddenly raised its claw and reached towards the green pearl as if it were grabbing it in the air. The ghost pearl then flourished with brilliance and shot back about ten meters before revolving in place. After a series of sways, the pearl transformed into a black demon tiger.

The tiger was huge and had intelligent eyes. As it roared, it spouted out dark-green wisps with bold and powerful intensity.

But what was most astonishing was that the huge tiger didn't have a hollow body like his sword's transformed azure flood dragons. Instead, its body was corporeal and appeared quite fearsome.

After a moment of shock, Han Li couldn't help but narrow his eyes. "An artifact spirit?"

This so-called "artifact spirit" is something every magic treasure can refine upon sealing the soul essence of a demon beast's primal soul into it. During an enemy confrontation, the soul essence and magic treasure would fuse, causing the magic treasure to transform into the form of the artifact spirit with greatly increased power. In addition, it would also gain the demon beast soul's original abilities. It could be said to be a shortcut to quickly raising a magic treasure's strength.

But for some unknown reason, regardless of whether or not the magic treasure successfully refined the sealed soul, only one attempt could be made to gain an artifact spirit. If a second attempt were to be attempted, the magic treasure would be incapable of absorbing the soul essence of the primal soul.

This was regarded by cultivators with great importance. If they had no urgent need to increase their magic treasure's power, they would spend as much time as possible to find an appropriate match and deliberate before conducting the sealing ceremony.

During the Trial of Blood and Fire back in the State of Yue, Nangong Wan probably took the primal soul of the inky flood dragon with the intention of sealing it as an artifact spirit.

After all, the inky flood dragon may have been young, but it was still a very rare flood dragon. That must've been why Nangong Wan was so excited when she obtained it.

Despite having slaughtered a great number of demon beasts of various ranks, Han Li had yet to see a spiritual flood dragon. This caused Han Li, who had wanted to use a flood dragon as his artifact spirit, to be rather gloomy.

In any case, the odds of success for artifact spirit seals were difficult to predict. It was almost as if there were no predictable patterns. However, there were a few certainties: the stronger the primal soul to be sealed as an artifact spirit, the lower the odds of success; and if the artifact spirit's strength was too weak, then it

would only increase the magic treasure's power by miniscule amount. As a result of this, a majority of cultivators' magic treasures do not possess artifact spirits. It wasn't that they couldn't find a target to their satisfaction. It was because the sealing of the artifact spirits had been an utter failure.

Thus, when Han Li saw that the ghost pearl contained an artifact spirit, he couldn't help but be startled. Han Li soon calmed down and licked his dry lips. He pointed to his two Bamboo Cloudswarm Swords, ordering his two transformed azure flood dragons to constrict the demon tiger. Before Han Li did anything else, he would first test the might of this demon tiger artifact spirit.

His flying swords didn't have any artifact spirits. Despite having their appearance transformed to that of flood dragons, they possessed none of their divine abilities.

Chapter 442: Ghost King (4)

The huge black tiger's eyes ominously glinted upon seeing the transformed flood dragons that were attempting to constrict him. With a low growl, it opened its mouth wide and shot out over ten, head-sized black light orbs in succession.

The transparent azure flood dragon was able to swipe away the first few light orbs, but it wasn't able to block the rest. With a mournful wail, the flood dragon was shattered, revealing the flying swords.

The flying swords were knocked over forty meters away by the remaining light orbs. The swords' azure light dimmed as if their spirituality had suffered damage.

When Han Li saw this, he felt slight regret and hastily pointed at them, causing them to streak back into his body for recuperation. Then with a wave of his other hand, he sent out another four azure flying swords, stabbing towards the huge tiger in a blur.

The black ghost shadow grew impatient upon seeing this. After taking a deep breath, it released a long, deafening shriek.

When the demon tiger heard this, it immediately lowered its head. Its neck became twisted and its two front claws dug into the ground. An astonishing scene followed!

A huge protrusion began to swell from the side of the tiger's head. With a flash of black light, it grew to become a smaller tiger

head. With the appearance of its second head, the demonic Qi surrounding its body soared. The transformation of this two headed tiger caused Han Li to tightly crease his brow.

At that moment, the two heads of the demon tiger artifact spirit widely opened their mouths and shot out a dense, overbearing barrage of black light balls towards Han Li.

Han Li didn't dare to be careless. He formed an incantation gesture and caused his four flying swords to violently sway in mid-flight, making them appear as eight blades. With a burst of radiance, the eight flying swords then combined together to form a ten-meter-long azure sword.

When Han Li looked at the sword, his eyes flickered with a strange expression. He opened his mouth without hesitation and spat out a cloud of glowing azure light towards the huge sword.

The cloud of pure true essence caused the huge sword to radiate brilliance and release a long, clear ring, before transforming into an azure blur. As it fiercely chopped towards the black light orbs, it faintly released the sounds of thunder.

Black and azure radiance scattered upon collision, followed by a series of explosions. This display released an astonishing pressure.

The huge azure sword chopped through the light orbs with unstoppable momentum in a display of divine might. However, the black light orbs were endless. For every destroyed light orb, it seemed as if the two tiger heads would just release another wild

torrent

This scene caused Han Li's expression to sink. This was unexpected.

As he considered using other magic techniques to strike the enemy or send out more flying swords, a series of slight fluctuations occurred about thirty meters behind him, where the elusive gray ghost shadow had appeared.

Apart from its blood red eyes, its body contained no other detectable auras. It seemed Han Li hadn't detected any abnormalities from behind him..

The grey shadow glanced at the flying beetles surrounding Han Li. After its gaze flickered around, it silently pounced towards Han Li's back as a thin streak of grey light, wanting to shatter Han Li's gold core.

It didn't care about the beetles in the slightest as it was most adept in stealth techniques. At that moment, his body had already become formless, with nothing to fear from the beetles. Under these circumstances, it was confident its claws would end Han Li before he could even react.

The ghost shadow's cultivation art was extremely strange. It shot towards Han Li as a grey blur at amazing speed without producing the slightest sound.

As the grey blur quickly approached Han Li's back, the gold-silver beetles began to hum and swarm towards it.

The grey shadow was startled. Before it could react, the swarm of gold-silver beetles had blocked his path forward and were swarming towards him. In an instant, the grey blur became covered in the swarm of gold-silver beetles, creating a silhouette of twinkling gold and silver glints.

With furious alarm, the grey shadow trembled several times in an attempt to throw off the beetles. This proved completely ineffective, and soon his body began to feel an intense, strange sensation.

After a moment of daze, it turned its head downward, resulting in a gaze of terror from its blood-red eyes.

The beetles that it had disregarded were now eating away at its incorporeal ghost body. Although their bites took much effort, they were truly eating away at his formless ghost body a mouthful at a time.

The grey shadow became panicked and started to undergo continuous transformations. In one moment, it had turned into a pitch-black fog; in another, it turned into a scaled phantom. But regardless of the transformation, the cloud of beetles firmly stuck onto his body, and he was incapable of breaking away from them.

In a short moment, his body was being devoured by at least several thousand exotic insects.

At that moment, Han Li finally turned his head to coldly glance at the grey shadow.

Without wasting the breath to say any nonsense, he released two more spirit beast pouches into the sky, summoning two additional swarms of droning, gold-silver insects into the air. The two huge swarms joined the existing swarm in devouring the grey shadow.

The grey ghost shadow eventually released a deafening, fearful scream towards the black ghost shadow for aid.

When the black shadow heard this, it revealed a trace of apprehension.

It glanced at the huge azure sword that was deadlocked with the huge tiger artifact spirit and appeared hesitant. But soon it narrowed its green glowing eyes before transforming into a ghost cloud and merging with the body of the demon tiger. The black tiger immediately released a pained, violent roar. Its body then stood erect and underwent a transformation, shrinking its forelegs and thickening its hind legs.

One of the faces of the tiger heads became indistinct for a moment before turning into a shaggy man's face that was covered by dense black Qi. As for the other tiger head, its eyes became even more brutal.

“Spirit Possession Technique!” Han Li felt his breath go cold as he involuntarily whispered the name of this magic technique.

This technique was similar to the “Greater Possession Technique” that allowed one to enter a living body, but it had an entirely different use.

Not only did the “Greater Possession Technique” not increase one’s strength, it only allowed one to make use of the original body’s strength. It was only a convenient magic technique to control a body from a long distance away. There also weren’t many consequences from using it.

As for the Spirit Possession Technique, it couldn’t be used on other cultivators. It could only be used on demon beasts that didn’t hold much intelligence.

After possession, not only would the cultivation of the caster and the target’s cultivation fuse, but their lives would be fused after a single use. If either party were to perish, it would bring the other party down with them. But what was most inconceivable was after fully making use of the Spirit Possession Technique, an entirely new individual will be created with a consciousness that possessed the memories and experiences of both parties, but neither of their wills.

Although the duration of the spirit possession was short initially, the more frequent the technique was used, the longer it would last. Eventually, the consciousness of the newly created individual would become dominant, and the technique would become incapable of reversing.

Ironically, the lifespan of this half human, half demon monster was pathetically short despite its great cultivation. Its astonishing power came at the cost of consuming an astonishing portion of its own life essence. It wouldn't last long before it eventually expired.

Additionally, rumor had it that cultivators that used the Spirit Possession Technique would have their souls forever wandering the abyss, incapable of reentering the cycle of reincarnation. This topic had caused many cultivators to pale while chatting about it.

But fortunately, very few cultivators knew about the Spirit Possession Technique, and even fewer actually practiced it. After all, it could end with oneself turning into a half human, half demon abomination.

The appearance of the ghost shadow and demon tiger's fusion was exactly as was rumored of the Spirit Possession Technique. However, this secret technique should only be capable of being used by cultivators. He hadn't heard that demon ghosts were capable of using it. But what was most astonishing was that he had done it with his own artifact spirit.

Doubt was unconsciously written all over Han Li's gloomy face while vigilance surged in his heart.

Chapter 443: Ghost King (5)

Despite being startled by this strange transformation, Han Li took a quick glance behind him and sneered at the sight.

A majority of the grey ghost shadow had already been devoured, and the last third of its ruined body was already on the verge of being consumed. He reckoned that if it were to now escape, its origin Qi would be immensely damaged, rendering it incapable of further attacking.

The Gold Devouring Beetles truly deserved its high ranking among exotic insects. Regardless of whether they were devouring spiritual Qi or Yin ghosts, they were immensely vicious. But, they were slightly slower when they were devouring the latter.

As Han Li thought this, the man-faced tiger abomination was at a loss for a short moment before revealing pleasant surprise at being awakened. It looked at Han Li, the ghost shadow being devoured behind him, and then looked at his own body.

It started laughing with an extremely hoarse voice and a freakish smile. The laughter gradually grew louder and continued as if there were no end. The nearby ghost mist eventually started roll from the laugh's vibrations.

Han Li didn't seem to mind this and only focused his cold eyes on the tiger abomination's movements. But after a short moment, Han Li's face grew pale, and his expression became grave.

The tiger abomination's weird laughter not only continued to become louder, but it also became more resounding and increasingly filled with Qi. Even after using the Great Development Technique to guard his mind, he felt dizzy as if countless claps of thunder roared past his ears.

‘Not good!’ As Han Li was carefully observing him, he seemed to have recalled something and his expression greatly changed.

Han Li hastily turned his head to find an alarming scene. The grey ghost shadow had unexpectedly disappeared without a trace, and his thousands of Gold Devouring Beetles were powerlessly lying on the ground, occasionally flapping their wings. They no longer had the vigor to continue devouring ghosts.

In his annoyance, Han Li hastily took out several spirit beast pouches and quickly stored the incapacitated Gold Devouring Beetles into them. While still enduring the deafening laughter, he turned his head to look at the others' fight.

He was initially astonished by what he saw, but soon grew relieved.

Fairy Violet Spirit and that black-robed man were in a fierce battle against the phantoms. Although the black-robed man's cultivation was far superior to the ghosts, he didn't have an overwhelming advantage due to the nature of his techniques and his greatly weakened magic treasure.

As for Fairy Violet Spirit, she had concealed herself away in a

glow of radiance by using a stone tablet and was only attempting to defend herself.

Han Li was slightly baffled when the two were unaffected by the strange laughter. But after some consideration, Han Li realized why.

It seemed that the power of two-headed abomination's strange laughter was limited to a small area. As a result, it was able to produce an astonishing power that his incredibly durable Gold Devouring Beetles were incapable of tolerating, causing them to fall off the grey ghost shadow.

Although these exotic insects have yet to reached their full potential, the might of the strange light could clearly be seen.

Were it not for the soul concentrating effect of the Great Development Technique, he feared he would've also become incapacitated to the strange laughter, only to await death.

The more he thought of it, the more he became aghast. Han Li had already determined that despite not being at Nascent Soul stage, it was definitely no weaker than a late Core Formation cultivator. Han Li suspected that this being was the a so-called ghost king.

At that moment, the abomination seemed to notice that the strange laughter had no effect on Han Li, who has still steadily standing. It eventually stopped and eerily stared at Han Li with its two heads.

Han Li felt uneasy upon looking at it, but he narrowed his eyes and boldly met its gaze.

At that moment, the badly damaged grey shadow appeared behind the abomination and shot straight towards the two headed abomination without any signs of stopping.

Han Li was at a loss from the sight, and his gaze continuously shifted.

‘The ghost shadow had already transformed. Why wasn’t it hiding from a distance? Why did it come back?’

While Han Li was bewildered, he saw something he was incapable of imagining. The eyes of the abomination strangely glinted and it grabbed hold of the grey ghost shadow. The black tiger head then widely opened its mouth and quickly swallowed down the grey shadow.

Han Li watched with complete astonishment. But what occurred next immediately dispelled Han Li’s doubts.

As the abomination roared to the sky, another protrusion appeared at its neck. It emerged to reveal a tiger head with a grey human face. The face of the third tiger head resembled that of an average woman.

After a moment of shock, Han Li quickly restored his calm

expression.

After the grey tiger head appeared, it narrowed its eyes, and its face became deathly pale as if it were heavily injured. But not long after, it opened its blood-red eyes and stared at Han Li with an expression of deep resentment. When Han Li saw this, he felt goosebumps appear on his body, and he felt his heart tremble.

At this moment, the head with the man's face at the center let out a fierce hiss. Afterwards, the abomination started to fearlessly approach Han Li in large strides.

A black light flashed from its body with every step, causing its body to swell. After about a dozen steps, the abomination was as tall as a three story building. The sight caused Han Li to blanch.

Without taking the time to think, Han Li waved his arms, summoning over a hundred huge ape puppets around him. The puppets simultaneously opened their mouths and densely filled the sky with beams of various colored light.

Han Li then pointed the huge azure sword, having it join the assault as a long blur of frightening speed and astonishing pressure.

When the three headed abomination saw this, the middle head revealed a trace of astonishment, but it soon sneered.

The left and right head widely opened their mouths. While the

pure tiger head began spouting out orbs of black light, the grey woman's head filled the entire area of wisps grey ghost flames.

The combined attack of the flame wisps and light orbs managed to forcibly block the many light beams. Although a few of the beams managed to pierce through, the few staggered light beams were completely ineffective.

Han Li unconsciously frowned. With a cold glint from his eyes, he suddenly casted a sword incantation seal. Shining with even brighter radiance, the azure streak traveled with increased speed.

Under the cover of the huge ape puppet's attacks, the huge sword instantly pierced through the flame wisps and light orb with unchallenged momentum. It flew around the waist of the beast and attempted to slash through it with a flash of brilliance.

But what Han Li saw next left him at a loss for words.

The three heads of the abomination simultaneously released a bizarre roar and swiped its two claws at a speed Han Li couldn't perceive, resulting in the huge sword being trapped in its grasp.

The two hairy tiger claws seemed unaffected by the sharpness of the swordlight. Although the sword continuously swayed in its grasp, it was unable to break free. Han Li was unsure as of what to do.

Although the Bamboo Cloudsword wasn't refined for long and

didn't contain much power, it was inconceivable for it to be caught with mere claws. Could it be that their claws had been refined into a magic treasure?

Han Li's thoughts went off on a tangent.

When the abomination had restrained Han Li's flying swords, the three heads revealed a malicious expression. The middle head smiled sinisterly before opening its mouth and releasing a dense, black Yin Qi towards the struggling flying sword, gradually whittling away the intensity of its light.

Han Li's heart dropped upon seeing this.

The abomination's methods were ruthless, and its cultivation was immense. If he were to drag this on, this would not end well. He had to brave the risk and end this as soon as possible!

With that thought, Han Li couldn't help but turn his head towards the other group. The black-robed man and Fairy Violet Spirit were completely focussing their attention on fighting the demon beasts and had no time to look in Han Li's direction.

With that, a strange expression flickered through Han Li's eyes, and he slowly turned his head back.

The abomination's left and right heads were still busy dealing with the intense barrage of his huge ape puppets, and the middle head was fully focused on spouting out black Qi to corrupt his

Bamboo Cloudswarm Swords.

‘You’re courting death!’ Han Li’s heart soared with killing intent. Without any further hesitation, he formed an odd sword incantation gesture and fiercely pointed at his flying sword.

Chapter 444: Black Robes

Han Li pointed at the huge sword that was struggling to break free of the abomination's grasp.

It suddenly grew still and started to sparkle with green light.

When the middle-head that was spouting out black Qi saw this, it was stunned. Before it could even react, the flat of huge sword released several tens of arcs of faint gold lightning.

The arcs of lightning were incredibly fast. In an instant, the lightning traveled up from its furry claws onto its huge body, creating a net of golden light around the abomination's body.

The abomination's three heads simultaneously expressed shock. But before it could even move, Han Li uttered the word, "Suffer." The net of lightning covering it ruptured.

A scorching, blinding white light thoroughly submerged the abomination, leaving it incapable of being seen.

In that instant, Fairy Violet Spirit and the black-robed man couldn't help but look over in surprise. As for their opponents, the Weiwu Ghosts and the two Nightfiends, they appeared to be at a loss for a moment before suddenly fleeing away.

The two were alarmed at the scene, but after some hesitation, they merely watched them as they fled.

However, the Weeping Soul Beast took this opportunity to forcefully snort and absorb one of the fleeing spirits into its nose.

As for the blinding white light, it persisted for some time before fading away. The tiger abomination was standing motionlessly in place, and its three heads appeared frightened. However, their expressions were completely still. When a gust of cold wind flew past it, its huge body scattered the sky with grey ash before disappeared without a trace.

All that remained was the huge sword and a fist-sized tricolored pearl floating in midair. The colors black, green and grey were interweaved in the sparkling pearl.

Han Li let out a long sigh and waved his hand. With a dim cry, the huge azure sword dispersed into eight blades and flew back to Han Li. However, four of those blades had faded away in mid-flight. The other four blades obediently returned into Han Li's body and sunk into dormancy.

The previous arcs of lightning cleanly exhausted the swords' entire accumulation of its Divine Devilbane Lightning. They urgently required long term nurturing.

Han Li glanced at the strange pearl. With several blurs, his body appeared in front of the pearl. After intensely staring for it, he started muttering to himself.

After a short moment, a malicious expression flashed from his

face. With a flip of his hand, an azure flying sword appeared in his hand. Han Li fiercely chopped down at the pearl with a flash of radiance.

Pang. The pearl was chopped into two, releasing three streaks of black Qi flying away as if they were fearfully escaping. However, Han Li flicked the finger of his other hand and shot out three egg-sized fireballs towards them.

Puff. Puff. Puff. The three strands of black Qi faintly released miserable wails upon being struck with the fireballs before they were dissolved by the flames.

These demon ghosts was extremely devious. They hid away within the magic treasure and lured him into grabbing it. Had he fallen for it, he'd be in an inescapable confrontation for the control of his body.

However, this was something he had earlier anticipated when the body of the tiger abomination was exterminated by the Divine Devilbane Lightning.

After all, with the Gold Lightning Bamboo's grand reputation along with legends of its "Devilbane" characteristics, it would be truly heaven-defying if a full discharge of the four swords were unable to extinguish a demon ghost.

It was because he had this trump card that he so calmly and confidently entered the ghost mist. Despite having felt incredibly baffled when faced against the fused ghost demons, he was able to

keep calm particularly because of this.

Naturally, he had originally refrained from using the Divine Devilbane Lightning since the black-robed man and Fairy Violet Spirit were nearby. However, he hadn't expected the fused body of the tiger abomination to be extraordinarily ferocious. When it had foolishly used its claws to grab hold of his Bamboo Cloudswarm Swords, he naturally couldn't let go of such a great opportunity to use his Divine Devilbane Lightning.

With that, he erased a monster that was no weaker than a late Core Formation cultivator from this world.

Han Li lowered his head to look at the split pearl and lightly shook his head. He then turned around and walked towards Fairy Violet Spirit.

When the black-robed man saw this, his face was full of shock. Although he wasn't able to pay close attention to Han Li's battle, he had caught sight of the ghost demon's soul possession, transformation, and combined body. It had left him so aghast that he had immediately decided to flee once Han Li appeared entirely unable to be its match. The three headed demon tiger had appeared frighteningly powerful.

But he didn't expect that the such a monster so easily eliminated with just a burst of dazzling white light. He found it truly hard to believe. Could it be that he possessed a Heaven-Earth Inversive Antiquity from legend? He couldn't think of any other method that an early Core Formation cultivator like Han Li could use to exterminate the dreadful three-headed monster.

But if this were the case, he could entice Han Li and obtain a great supporter to accompany him through the Heavenvoid Hall. After all, he believed that only Nascent Soul eccentrics were capable of extinguishing such a powerful demon without the slightest injury.

With that thought, the black-robed man's astonished expression gradually disappeared to be replaced with a complicated expression as he looked at Han Li.

As for Fairy Violet Spirit, although she was greatly amazed by these events, she had already guessed that Han Li was an unordinary Core Formation cultivator. She quickly calmed down and looked at Han Li with a smile.

"Senior Han's abilities are truly remarkable. He was able to effortlessly exterminate such a dreadful ghost demon. It seems I was truly fortunate to have teleported together with Senior!" Fairy Violet Spirit gracefully said.

When Han Li heard this, he insipidly denied her, "Effortlessly? That wasn't effortless in the slightest."

"Senior is truly modest!" Fairy Violet Spirit's eyes were glowing with humor. It was obvious that she believed that Han Li wasn't being completely honest.

"What did Fellow Daoist use to produce that white light? It was immensely powerful." The black-robed man spoke for the first

time, but his voice was muffled and hoarse, sounding quite unnatural.

This unpleasant voice caused Han Li's eyes to flicker with a strange expression. He looked at the black-robed man with a smile.

After Han Li's smile faded away, he indifferently said, "So Fellow Daoist is a female cultivator! There is no need to speak with a fake voice. Fairy Violet Spirit and have already seen through it."

Fairy Violet Spirit gave a charming smile upon hearing this.

The black-robed woman was initially startled, but her eyes soon revealed humiliation and anger.

A long while later, she spoke with a delicate, soft voice, "Since you Fellow Daoists have already seen through it, I will no longer hide this. It merely made matters convenient."

With that said, the black-robed woman hesitated for a moment before removing the hood of her black robe, revealing an astonishingly gorgeous face.

Not only did this woman have incredibly fair and soft skin, but she had long, silky hair that was draped over her shoulder. She wore a dazzling garland on her head that added a mysterious charm, causing her to appear elegant and unyielding.

Despite being also a woman, Fairy Violet Spirit appeared

breathless at the sight of the black-robed woman's beauty. But something soon came to mind and she stealthily took a glance at Han Li.

What she saw left her feeling somewhat uneasy.

Han Li had been looking at the black-robed woman in a daze. His eyes revealed a strange, unclear expression.

A blush appeared on the black-robed woman's flawless face. With both pride and gloom in her head, she coldly said, "Has Fellow Daoist had enough to look at, or is there something something wrong with my face?" With that said, the black-robed woman's expression sunk.

Han Li didn't grow angry at the rebuke, but neither did he withdraw his gaze. Instead, he let out a long breath and examined the woman with a mysterious smile. He appeared rather interested.

Not only did she raise her eyebrows this time, but her face also grew cold. Even Fairy Violet Spirit felt apprehensive, doubting whether or not Han Li was acting out of wicked thoughts.

But after some further thoughts, her uneasiness seemed had disappeared.

Due to predetermined innate aptitudes, there were far fewer female Core Formation cultivators in the cultivation world in

comparison to male cultivators. Thus, a large majority of high grade Dao companion pairs normally consisted of a man with Core Formation cultivation and a woman at Foundation Establishment. As such, the effectiveness of pair cultivation was not ideal for the male cultivator. As for the small number for female Core Formation cultivators, they attracted many suitors that believed themselves to be worthy of them.

It made sense for a female cultivator possessing such beauty and deep cultivation as the black-robed woman to cause Han Li to feel tempted.

Chapter 445: Yuan Yao

Just as the black-robed woman was about to grow furious, Han Li's smile faded and he earnestly said, "I didn't expect that after a mere hundred years, Lady Yuan would enter Core Formation. You have my sincere congratulations!"

When Han Li addressed her as 'Lady Yuan', the woman's angry, embarrassed expression immediately disappeared. She hastily attempted to refute him with panic, "Lady Yuan? You're mistaken. My surname is Ruan."

This situation was the exact opposite of what Han Li had expected. He couldn't help but stare at the woman's flickering eyes.

At the moment, the gorgeous woman's complexion had paled, and her hand was placed on her storage pouch. Her eyes were wide open and carried unmistakable hostility.

The mood suddenly became strained! All of which originated from Han Li addressing her as 'Lady Yuan' with a casual tone.

While Han Li wore a slight smile on his face, he actually felt truly puzzled.

As for Fairy Violet Spirit, the current situation was even more of a surprise. Without even thinking, she took a half step closer towards Han Li, making her standing clear. In terms of both familiarity and might, Han Li was the obvious choice.

With an unchanged expression, Han Li slowly said, “It seems there is a misunderstanding! Fellow Daoist Yuan most likely doesn’t remember me. After all, we had only met once before over a hundred years ago.”

“We’ve only met once? Over a hundred years ago?” The woman’s expression slightly relaxed, but her eyes were still vigilant and she expressed doubt.

The tension had been greatly eased!

But after looking at Han Li for a moment, she doubtfully asked, “I’ve taken a good look at you, but I don’t remember ever seeing you. Are you attempting to dupe me?” With that said, the woman’s eyes flickered with cold intent, faintly revealing a trace enmity.

Han Li felt at a loss, not knowing whether he should laugh or cry.

He didn’t bother playing coy and directly asked, “Over a hundred years ago, did Lady Yuan go to the Sky Capital Market at Stalwart Star Island?”

The black robed woman blankly stared for a moment before nodding her head in recollection. After looking intensely at Han Li’s face, she revealed a pensive expression. “Stalwart Star Island’s Sky Capital Market? I’ve been there many times. Could it be that you saw me there?”

She seemed to have recalled something.

“That’s right. At the time, you were together with a beautiful friend. My Martial Uncle Crooked Soul and I met you at the edge of the market city.” When he mentioned Crooked Soul, Han Li unconsciously glanced at Fairy Violet Spirit who was aware that Crooked Soul had been his avatar.

Naturally, when Fairy Violet Spirit heard Han Li mention Crooked Soul as his Martial Uncle, she revealed a mysterious smile. Although she didn’t know the circumstances at the time, she was sure that Han Li must have been playing out an elaborate scheme. She couldn’t help but find it ridiculous! But naturally, she wasn’t going to talk about this matter without cause.

Speaking of Crooked Soul, Fairy Violet Spirit had been wondering for quite a while why his avatar wasn’t present at his side. Crooked Soul would’ve been of great assistance to them.

After blinking her eyes several times, the black-robed woman came to a sudden realization and revealed an expression of disbelief. “Fellow Daoist’s words feel quite familiar to me. Could it be that your esteemed self was at the entrance of the Sky Capital Market and was accompanied by a Core Formation Senior?”

Han Li bitterly smiled.

“Lady Yuan has finally remembered. It seemed that I had given you quite an ordinary impression. Han Li spoke with a chuckle.

The black-robed woman deeply blushed upon hearing Han Li. But now that she recognized him, she completely relaxed and self consciously said, “Please don’t take offense, Fellow Daoist Han! At the time, Fellow Daoist was truly...” The woman found it difficult to continue.

Han Li replied with laughter, “Wasn’t it because my appearance and cultivation were too ordinary? It’s no surprise you two ladies didn’t take note of me!” Han Li was calm and didn’t display the slightest annoyance.

“It seems I’ve made a fool of myself!” Han Li’s attitude had greatly eased the black-robed woman. After all, Han Li’s current abilities were impressive, and she was fearful that Han Li had been offended over being forgotten. With her magic treasure greatly damaged, she was unwilling to casually offend him.

With that thought, she continued, “I must also congratulate Fellow Daoist! In these hundred years, Fellow Daoist also cultivated to Core Formation from Qi Refinement! Your magic power is also so profound that you are actually capable of eliminating the ghost king level fiend!”

Han Li inwardly shook his head in response to the woman’s friendly words. He wasn’t at Qi Condensation stage at the time. He had been at late Foundation Establishment. Had he not refined the “Three Essence Revolutions” along with the “Great Development Technique”, he feared he wouldn’t have entered Core Formation.

However, this woman had truly cultivated from Qi Condensation to Core formation in that timespan. When he recognized the black-

robed woman, he was truly shocked!

This woman didn't possess particularly impressive aptitude, so Han Li inwardly guessed that she must've had a fortuitous encounter during those hundred years. Otherwise, it would've been impossible for an ordinary cultivator like her to have improved so quickly.

Although he had carefully examined her previously, he was unable to see the spiritual roots of a fellow early Core Formation cultivator as their body's magic power blocked his sight.

With that thought, Han Li didn't stare at the woman any longer and turned his eyes towards the ghost mist surrounding them.

Han Li smiled and thought to say something, but Fairy Violet Spirit spoke first with a slight frown, "Fellow Daoists, let us set off! It would be best to not stay here for too long. It would be troublesome if another fearsome phantom were to appear."

Han Li silently agreed with a smile. The black-robed woman Yuan Yao had no objections, and the three set off into the ghost mist after confirming their direction.

.....

There was a place that appeared similar to a garden, but it contained nameless, rare flowers and plants. It had eight pavilions finely carved from jade with thirty cultivators distributed sparsely

among them.

A majority of these cultivators had pale complexions and were stained with blood as if they had arrived here after a bitter struggle. However, their faces revealed unconcealable excitement. There were even a few cultivators that were whispering to one another.

Grandmaster Zenith Yin, Wan Tianming and the other Nascent Soul cultivators were at this location. The two factions were meditating at two different pavilions.

As for the two Star Palace elders, they were floating at some place in midair. They were expressionlessly sitting cross legged in meditation, appearing as if they were statues.

A dense, pitch-black ghost fog rolled around vigorously four hundred meters away from where the garden laid. It was obstructed by an invisible wall, appearing as if they were two entirely different worlds.

Suddenly, the fog separated to reveal a male cultivator calmly walking through it.

This male cultivator wore green robes, appeared youthful, and had a refined appearance. But what was most odd was that there wasn't any abnormalities on his body, and his appearance was serene as if he hadn't experienced any battles on his way there.

This strange scene attracted the amazement of the nearby cultivators. They looked at him with complicated expressions.

At that moment, Grandmaster Zenith Yin opened his eyes and glanced at the male cultivator before revealing a disappointed expression. He shut his eyes once more and didn't pay any further attention to the male cultivator.

When this male cultivator looked at Grandmaster Zenith Yin, his face revealed a trace of resentment during a moment of carelessness. However, his calm appearance quickly returned and he walked forward with large strides.

He didn't enter any of the pavilions to take a seat. Instead, he found a remote corner and stood there with hands behind his back, indifferently examining the cultivators that were there. Seeing that Han Li had yet to appear, his delicate face lightly frowned, but he soon became expressionless.

At that moment, unbeknownst to anyone else, a deep resounding man's voice could be heard in the youth's mind.

'What? That assistant of yours isn't here? Could he have fallen to a malicious spirit? Hehe! It seems the person you sought wasn't particularly worthy of note.' The voice lazily said.

The youth grew angry and he used his spiritual sense to strictly rebuke it, 'Silence! Don't casually speak inside my body! There are many Nascent Soul cultivators here. If one or two of them were to hear you, what do you think will happen?'

Chapter 446: Regrouping

‘Humph! If they discover us, at worst, we will just return into the ghost mist. Despite not being able to match Nascent Soul cultivators in direct battle, who can match the escape methods of us Ghost Dao cultivators?’ The resounding man’s voice spoke with rejection.

‘What do you know? There are at least four Nascent Soul cultivators here, and they all have magic treasures and divine abilities that are particularly effective in restraining our Ghost Dao techniques. If you want to die, don’t involve me. Else, I’ll be forced to break our agreement and exterminate you here.’ The youthful Bone Sage rebuked with an icy voice.

‘There is no need for Old Brother Bone Sage to be so angry! I won’t mention it again. However, you cannot renege on our agreement to find a suitable living body. Why else would I have given you a trace of my soul essence and willingly allowed you to leave the ghost mist!’ This person seemed fearful of the Bone Sage’s rage, but in the end, he couldn’t help but remind the Bone Sage of their agreement.

‘Don’t worry. Since I need your help to deal with my traitorous disciple Zenith Yin, I will get you a physical body before I act. Furthermore, as fellow sufferers that were forced to cultivate the Ghost Dao, how could I possibly renege on our agreement?’ The Bone Sage indifferently said.

‘Hehe! Your words have truly put me at ease.’ After that was said, the resounding voice disappeared from the Bone Sage’s mind.

The Bone Sage sighed with relief and sat against a small tree before dozing off.

After some time had passed, an increasing number of cultivators left the ghost mist with increasingly heavier damage. Quite a number of them had even sustained great injuries to their Origin Qi that would require many years of dedicated treatment, else their cultivation level would suffer as a result. But even in this sorry state, they all wore expressions of unconcealable happiness. After all, so long as they passed the ghost mist trial, they would still be able to acquire a few rarely seen spiritual medicines.

After about seventy more cultivators arrived at the garden, the rate of new arrivals greatly decreased. In the coming day, only a sparse few cultivators had arrived.

The youth that had accompanied Fairy Violet Spirit at the beginning was amongst them. His clothes were damaged and his face was pale as if he had suffered through hardships on the way there.

Upon entering the garden, the youth swept his gaze past the garden and revealed worry upon seeing that Fairy Violet spirit wasn't there. His expression was indecisive.

At that moment, Grandmaster Zenith Yin and the Bone Sage both became uneasy upon seeing that Han Li had yet to arrive.

The Bone Sage was the calmer of the two. Although he felt

irritation, his face still maintained peacefulness. However, Grandmaster Zenith Yin was unable to endure. He occasionally opened his eyes and gloomily swept his gaze past the ghost mist, unable to calm down.

In truth, this person's gloomy temperament would've normally prevented him from displaying his impatience. However, Han Li possessed something that was vital to his treasure hunt, leaving him in a hopeless situation.

A majority of people didn't take notice of these actions, but the confucian-robed old man that was meditating nearby had opened his eyes. With a light cough, he slowly asked, "Could Fellow Daoist's unease be due to concern for someone that has yet to arrive?"

The old man stared at Grandmaster Zenith Yin with doubt.

When Zenith Yin heard this, his expression became calm once more, and he indifferently replied, "It couldn't be considered concern. It's just a very interesting Junior that I've met once before!"

A strange glint flashed through the confucian-robed old man's eyes. He said with a mysterious smile, "An interesting Junior? Fellow Daoist Wu must introduce me to him. I too am quite fond of guiding inexperienced Juniors that hold potential."

'Old bastard! He is far too suspicious.' Zenith Yin was extremely annoyed that Han Li had yet to appear, and was unwilling to deal

with the old man's schemes. As such, he bluntly closed his eyes and forced himself to meditate.

At that same time, the resounding voice could be heard once more in the corner of the Bone Sage's mind.

'Bone Sage, your assistant still hasn't arrived? Could he have been devoured by ghosts? Such an assistant would prove too weak to be useful.' The voice's tone contained a trace of schadenfreude.

The Bone Sage sighed. Given its temperament, it was truly impossible to keep him silent. It was also impossible for him to kill it as it would prove far too useful to him.

Until now, there also hadn't been anyone that had glanced at him with a baffled gaze. It seemed that their short talks didn't arouse any suspicion.

With that thought, the Bone Sage unhappily said, 'This person is exceptionally mysterious. Although he is young and his cultivation is only at early Core Formation, it is absolutely impossible for him to have fallen to any fierce ghosts. Even if you came across him, you'd turn tail and flee if your soul didn't scatter first. Do not underestimate him.'

'Early Core Formation? Isn't Bone Sage underestimating me too greatly? Against such a cultivator, I'd only have to open my mouth, and his blood essence would already be absorbed.' The deep voice spoke with disbelief.

‘Did you enjoy my Devil Extinguishing Arrow? What would you do if he possessed flying swords also made from Golden Lightning Bamboo?’

The deep voice grew silent for a moment before speaking with great skepticism, ‘Flying Swords made of Gold Lightning Bamboo? Are you joking? There was only ever one stalk of Gold Lightning Bamboo, and you refined it into the Devil Extinguishing Arrow. How can there be other Gold Lightning Bamboo magic treasures?’

‘Hehe! You’ll find out whether or not this is true sooner or later. And before you say I didn’t warn you, apart from his Gold Lightning Bamboo magic treasure, he also possesses a few other troublesome techniques. Why else would I, the Bone Sage, join hands with an early Core Formation cultivator?’ With that said, the Bone Sage didn’t pay any further attention to the voice and closed his eyes into oblivious meditation.

The deep voice tactfully kept silent and was pondering whether or not the Bone Sage had spoken truthfully.

Six hours later, the Bone Sage now appeared irritated and wondered why Han Li was taking so long to arrive. At that moment, an area of the ghost mist rolled away and made a path, revealing three people walking side by side.

The three were Han Li’s party. As for the gorgeous woman Yuan Yao, she was back to concealing her breathtaking beauty with her black robes.

Han Li was stunned for a moment after having seen that there were so many people present. He soon glanced at the scene and walked towards an uninhabited area without hesitation. Fairy Violet Spirit and Yuan Yao then gave each other a tacit glance before going their own ways.

At that moment, a silhouette appeared with a blur. A handsome, azure-jacketed youth had rushed over and earnestly spoke to Fairy Violet Spirit, "Great! Violet Spirit, you're safe! I was so worried." After this was said, he hastily approached her and carefully examined her for any injuries.

"Brother Li, I'm fine." When Fairy Violet Spirit saw him, she stopped and forced a smile. Her expression continuously shifted.

After Yuan Yao took a deep look at those two, she went to another location with fluttering clothes.

Han Li, who had found a lone place to stand, turned around to see Yuan Yao following him. With slight surprise, he immediately frowned and said, "Lady Yuan, we've already left the ghost mist. For what matter have you followed me?"

Although this woman's breathtaking beauty had touched his heart, he didn't have any plans to work together with any strangers and immediately spoke with a cold intent of rejection.

Han Li's blunt words didn't cause Yun Yao to become angry. Instead, she sighed and said, "Please don't take offense, Brother Han. I've only followed you because I have no choice! Fellow

Daoist should know that my magic treasure had suffered great damage in the fight against the ghost king, and I am not capable of using it any further. And with the great dangers in the Heavenvoid Hall, this woman only knows of Brother Han. Coming here was a stupid decision. Please do not leave me here to die!”

With that said, the black-robed woman’s eyes turned slightly red as if she were about to weep tears. The scene caused Han Li to intensely frown.

“Lady Yuan! Since you’ve said this, I will need to ask some questions. But first, I’d like to make it known that I am not an upright gentleman, nor is my heart filled with benevolence. I am especially unwilling to be used without payment or knowledge.” Han Li calmly spoke as if he hadn’t seen the woman’s sad expression.

“Fellow Daoist Han, please don’t hesitate to ask. So long as the questions don’t touch on any secrets, I will definitely give a satisfactory answer.” This woman felt somewhat annoyed that Han Li hadn’t revealed any pity or sympathy towards the fairer sex. However, there were items that she must acquire and she had no choice but to agree.

After placing his hands behind his back, Han Li unhurriedly asked the woman without blinking, “My questions are quite simple. What is Fellow Daoist Yuan’s objective? Up to which trial do you intend to challenge? Also, from the panic you had shown earlier, it seems you’re hiding something. Do you carry any great troubles on you? I don’t wish to be involved in any of your quarrels by association.”

Chapter 447: Different World

The woman remained calm when faced with Han Li's questions, giving the impression that she had anticipated them. However, his last question caused her to reveal slight panic. She answered with a forced smile, "Fellow Daoist's last question is quite meaningful. What great trouble's could I have provoked? The reason why I was so panicked at the beginning was because..."

Without waiting for her to finish, Han Li insipidly interrupted, "If Lady Yuan doesn't wish to tell the truth, then leave it be. I have no intention of listening to any empty words."

"You..." Seeing that Han Li was unmoved, Yuan Yao had finally revealed a trace of anger. She forcefully stomped her foot and left in a fit of resentment.

Han Li's face didn't reveal the slightest change upon seeing the woman leave. He soon turned his gaze towards Fairy Violet Spirit, who was currently talking with a male youth with an easy expression. When she saw Han Li looking at her, she gave him a light hearted smile and muttered something to the youth.

After seeing that, Han Li turned his gaze away, but before he thought of anything else, he heard the Bone Sage's voice.

"Why were you so slow? This master had believed you weren't able to deal with a trifling ghost mist! Could it be you came across a ghost king?" The Bone Sage's voice contained dissatisfaction and doubt.

Having heard that, Han Li gazed into the distant ghost mist and indifferently replied, “On my way here, I encountered a fierce ghost. However, that didn’t take up much time. It was the large group of Souleater Spirits that came afterwards that wasted much of my time.

“Souleater Spirits?” The Bone Sage revealed an expression of shock.

“What? Does Senior fear those things despite cultivating the Ghost Dao?” Han Li asked with a calm tone, but his words carried a trace of mockery.

“How could I possibly fear them? However, this old man is quite curious to know how you three managed to escape such a calamity.” The Bone Sage quickly changed the topic.

Han Li inwardly sneered as he casually gave an explanation, “Junior doesn’t really have anything to say. We merely had good luck and were able to avoid disaster through a fluke!”

‘Little sneak!’ Needless to say, the Bone Sage inwardly cursed at him. After a moment of silence, he had no choice but to ask a different question, “Fine! Since you’re unwilling to explain, I won’t continue to pry. The next time I’ll talk with you, we’ll go together to fetch the Ninecurl Spirit Ginseng. Afterwards, you will lend me your assistance in exterminating my traitorous disciple Zenith Yin.”

“No problem! So long as you hand the Ninecurl Spirit Ginseng to me, I will take the risk of helping you.” Han Li agreed without the slightest hesitation. It seemed he had long made up his mind.

The Bone Sage was satisfied by his decisive answer. After a light chuckle, he spoke no more.

However, he didn't catch sight of Han Li's mocking smile and the cold light that occasionally flickered from his eyes.

Han Li suddenly felt another person looking at him. He couldn't help but raise his head. As a result, he caught sight of Grandmaster Zenith Yin looking at him with a trace of joy that reminded Han Li of a tiger eyeing its prey.

Han Li expressively turned his head around and bitterly smiled. It seemed that avoiding a confrontation with Grandmaster Zenith Yin was impossible. Zenith Yin clearly had no intention of letting him go for a reason he was completely unaware of.

However, Grandmaster Zenith Yin seemed to have his own misgivings. Why was he waiting so patiently and hadn't made a move to restrain him within the hall.

Han Li gloomily sat down on a patch of grass and meditated. He had consumed quite a bit of magic power in the ghost fog and needed to recover to his peak state for the troubles that were soon to come.

Staring from a distance, the woman Yuan Yao glanced at Han Li with unwillingness. While her gaze contained resentment, it also held a trace of loneliness.

Although Fairy Violet Spirit was chatting to the earnest and concerned man with a smile, her gaze unconsciously turned in Han Li's direction as if she were worried. As for Han Li, he was meditating, appearing oblivious of the two's gazes.

Time quickly passed by, and the next day arrived.

At this point, many of the cultivators were already impatient. They surrounded a bare stone slab lying at the center of the jade pavilions.

With their experience from the first hall, these cultivators were particularly shocked to see the stone slab reveal a transportation formation with a flash of white light. Its appearance was exactly the same as the one from the first hall.

At that moment, the two white-clothed elders from the Star Palace calmly walked towards it. After examining it, the old man with the kindly face slowly said, "This transportation formation will take you to paths of ice and fire where you will enter the second trial. Before entering the second trial, everyone will have some time to gather spiritual herbs and spiritual fruit as rewards for passing the first trial. If you feel that undergoing another trial is too dangerous, you may return here. In a month, a transportation formation will appear here to take you back to the main hall."

“But regardless of whether you decide to undergo the second trial or to return here, you only have one day to pick the spiritual herbs throughout the next area. Past that point, nothing else will appear, and you will be stuck there. To the best of my knowledge, cultivators that have remained there have never returned at the reopening of the Heavenvoid Hall. As for the reason of their disappearance, it is still unknown to this day. So don’t believe that you’ll come across fortune by deliberately staying there.

The white-clothed old man’s voice wasn’t very loud, but his voice was resounding and was heard by all those there. Those that already knew this were inattentive while the others who were ignorant were greatly surprised.

After this was said, both of these enforcement elders stepped through the transportation formation and disappeared without a trace.

This time, the other cultivators showed no hesitation, and each of them rushed through. After all, time was limited. They only had a short amount of time to search for the spiritual items. They had best make good use of it.

Han Li unconsciously turned his gaze towards the bone sage before hastily entering the crowd of cultivators that were hurrying towards the transportation formation.

But just as he walked towards the transportation formation, Han Li felt Grandmaster Zenith Yin’s covetous gaze fall upon him once

more. Fury and apprehension stirred in his heart, and he sourly grimaced as he passed through the white light.

Despite knowing that someone harbored malicious intentions towards him, he was powerless to do anything about it. This feeling of helplessness awakened a feeling of an intense vengeance that he had forgotten many years before.

After the light faded away, Han Li walked a few steps outside of the transportation formation and examined his surroundings, discovering a sight that left him dumbfounded.

The sky was dark blue and was filled with clouds. An endless expanse of emerald-green grass surrounded him, accompanied by a wind that carried a strong scent of plants. There was also a mountain range that could be faintly seen in the distance.

How were they still in the Heavenvoid Hall? This graceful environment clearly belonged on land!

For a long while, Han Li remained in a silent daze.

At that moment, the Bone Sage walked out of the transportation formation. Scoffing at Han Li's shocked appearance, he said, "Isn't it amazing? The first time I came here, I didn't appear much better than yourself. But this isn't an illusion; it is a genuine existence. With its abundant spiritual Qi and its indescribable smell of pure nature, this isn't a place that exists in the outside world."

He then took a deep breath and slowly savored it before continuing, “This small world should be the result of a great divine ability of some cultivator from the desolate era. Unfortunately, those of us in the later generation never again witnessed their grand, marvelous abilities.” The Bone Sage sighed and revealed a desire to witness the ancient cultivators.

“Splitting the Heavens and Earth apart by oneself?” Han Li was overwhelmed with disbelief.

Guessing what Han Li was thinking, the Bone Sage calmly continued, “There is nothing strange about it! The divine abilities of ancient cultivators far exceed what we can even imagine. But for some unknown reason, these ancient cultivators completely disappeared from this world. It was after this that our own inferior cultivation world came into existence.”

Han Li didn’t further question this, and his eyes suddenly fell down to a small road in front of him.

The winding road was overgrown with unknown, wild plants. It was hard to discern, and it led into the unseen distance.

In Han Li’s eyes, the mystery of the ancient cultivator’s amazing abilities along with their disappearance had nothing to do with the matter at hand. He’d be better served by addressing the matter at hand before considering any matters having to do with ancient cultivators.

Chapter 448: Small Mountain

“After following this road for several hundred kilometers, you will see a canyon surrounded by a barrier. It is narrow and very long. Upon entering the canyon, you will be in an entirely different world. Within this world, there will be two paths to choose from: the road of profound crystal and the path of lava. The road of profound crystal is chilling to the bone, and if you are not careful, your body will turn to ice. As for path of lava, it is scorching hot where one may find themselves easily turned to ash. Only after reaching the end of the canyon will you find the next transportation formation. Once you pass through it, you will have completed the second trial: the Paths of Fire and Ice. As the two from the Star Palace have said, everyone will have a day to search for spiritual medicines before they must enter the canyon. As for what everyone will find, it will depend on their own luck!” The Bone Sage finished indifferently.

Han Li opened and closed his mouth several times and was thinking about what to ask. But when he saw the Bone Sage’s expression stir, he remained silent as three more flashes of white light appeared from the transportation formation behind them.

The arriving cultivators indifferently glanced at Han LI and the Bone Sage before excitedly flying off towards the distant mountains as streaks of light. They all appeared eager to begin hunting for treasure.

As he watched them fly further away, the Bone Sage frowned and hesitated a moment before saying, “Let us set off! If we wait for Zenith Yin to arrive, it will stir up quite a bit of trouble.” Then without waiting for a response from Han Li, he transformed into a

dark cloud and took to the skies.

Han Li's expression greatly changed. He wordlessly turned into an azure streak and chased after him.

Not long after Han Li and the Bone Sage took off, Zenith Yin, Wan Tianming and the other Nascent Soul cultivators each appeared from the transportation formation. With the Righteous Dao headed by Wan Tianming and the Devil Dao headed by Man Huzi, both sides stood in confrontation.

When Zenith Yin appeared, he hastily swept his gaze around and felt slightly disappointed that Han Li wasn't around. However, his expression didn't betray this in the slightest. He was even bantering with the Confucian-robed old man as normal.

As for the beautiful woman surnamed Wen, when she saw their confrontation, she coldly said, "I only wish to pick spiritual herbs. After I am done, I will be returning to the pavilion. You all may fight as you see fit, but do not involve me in your affairs." With that said, she turned into a ball of silver light and ripped through the air.

Wan Tianming took several glances at the Devil Dao cultivators and whispered a few words to his fellow Righteous Dao cultivators. Soon after, the three of them wordlessly took off into the skies as a tricolored light.

The remaining Devil Dao eccentrics couldn't help but watch with widened eyes. They were caught unprepared and were unsure

whether to closely follow after them or mind their own business. But before they could respond, the Righteous Dao cultivators were already out of sight.

When Grandmaster Zenith Yin saw this, his eyes flashed with a strange gaze. After a cough, he said with a wide smile, “Brother Qing, Brother Man! I will be taking my leave to pick a few spiritual herbs for pill refinement. Let’s meet up at the entrance of the canyon.”

With that said, Grandmaster Zenith Yin flung out his sleeve and released a black mist. After the mist drew in Wu Chou, he disappeared with a gust of cold wind.

Man Huzi’s expression grew stern. As for old man Qing, he frowned with contemplation.

“That Zenith Yin left rather quickly! It seems his movement technique is growing increasingly wondrous. Fellow Daoist Qing, if you are free, how about picking some Genesis Fruit with me? With our combined strength, we will have a higher certainty of dealing with the mountain demons guarding the spirit tree. When the time comes, I’ll give you a share. Since your age is quite advanced, these fruits should extend your life by no small amount.” Man Huzi spoke to the pondering Confucian-robed old man.

When Layman Qing Yi heard this, he was initially stunned. After his gaze flickered a few times, he replied with an embarrassed appearance, “Brother Man, my apologies! I also have some important matters to attend to and have no time to accompany you. I will see you again at the canyon entrance!” With that said,

he apologetically cupped his hands and flew off. Man Huzi's complexion turned an unsightly green.

“Humph! Do you truly believe that this island lord requires your assistance to acquire some Genesis Fruit? I'll make a show of dealing with you two once we arrive in the inner halls!” Man Huzi muttered before launching himself into the sky with a stomp. Then with several flashes of yellow light, he disappeared.

By now, Han Li had been following the Bone Sage's black cloud for four hours, and the land beneath them was no longer the leveled prairie. It had been replaced with an expansive winding mountain range. The varied mountains made for a spectacular sight as he rushed past them.

Enveloped in an aura of azure sword light, Han Li spontaneously said, “The place you spoke of is truly far! I suspect if we fly for much longer, we'll reach the world's end!”

A scoff came from the black cloud ahead of him. The Bone Sage bluntly said, “Do you believe that an item such as the Ninecurl Spirit Ginseng can be found in some convenient location? If it weren't so difficult to acquire, we wouldn't have had the chance. Youngster, if you wish to acquire great benefits, you should learn to be patient!”

When Han Li heard him speak in a lecturing tone, his eyes coldly shined but he remained silent. After all, this old eccentric possessed an immense amount of experience and was qualified to speak with such a tone. Although he was a bit unhappy, he wasn't about to waste his breath on useless words.

However, flying for such a long time without even catching sight of the destination caused Han Li to feel uneasy. He couldn't help but grow more wary of the old devil, worrying that he may fall victim to his schemes when he least expected.

Their alliance was completely unreliable! Han Li didn't believe that in the past, the Bone Sage had flown such a long way for no reason at all.

Had he wanted to find spiritual herbs, he would've sought for them in a few of the mountains abundant with spiritual Qi that they had already passed by. Even at such a high altitude, Han Li was still able to clearly feel their dense spiritual Qi fluctuations. The spiritual herbs that those mountains nurtured were certain to be extremely rare.

Han Li was very skeptical as to why the Bone Sage had ignored them in a previous journey to Heavenvoid Hall.

Uncertain of whether the Bone Sage seen through Han Li's suspicions or whether he had felt uneasy from the silence, the Bone Sage spoke with a hesitant tone, "I have been to this world two times already. I had fortunately discovered the Ninecurl Spirit Ginseng the first time I came here. At the time, it was only because I was chasing after a Flying Shrieker for such a long distance that I even stumbled across the Ninecurl Spirit Ginseng. After all, these Immortal items aren't said to appear here. According to my assumptions, the Spirit Ginseng was coincidentally formed from heaven and earth after many years of nourishment from the dense spiritual Qi in this half-sealed world. It was something that had

formed outside the expectations of the ancient cultivators. Hehe! And now it will prove to be convenient for you!” The Bone Sage’s last words revealed a rare trace of envy and regret.

“So it’s like that!” Although Han Li somewhat doubted this and was still keeping his wits about him, he felt somewhat more at ease.

The two continued to fly for quite some time before the black cloud came to a sudden stop.

The Bone Sage looked down with a flickering gaze. He unhurriedly said, “We’ve arrived. However, you shouldn’t become careless. The Ninecurl Spirit Ginseng is extremely sensitive. If it feels that anything is amiss, it will drill into the mountains and disappear. You must take a moment of careful consideration before acting. Else, we will return empty handed.”

“Is Senior sure this is the place? There is a spiritual object here?” When Han Li swept his gaze at the area below, his expression turned odd.

There was a small unremarkable mountain lying below the two. Not only was it completely barren, but it was pathetically sparse with spiritual Qi. It largely contrasted with the large mountains surrounding it.

Han Li found it hard to believe that this small desolate mountain was where the Ninecurl Spirit Ginseng dwelled.

The Bone Sage's black cloud slowly scattered to reveal his body. He spoke to Han Li with a mysterious smile, "Hehe, youngster. You're easily surprised! I was also quite astonished when I didn't catch sight of the Ninecurl Spirit Ginseng, but this mountain is truly the place where it resides."

Since the Bone Sage had said this, Han Li kept silent and bluntly watched below for any movements.

The Bone Sage was no longer paying attention to Han Li and was gazing down below. His eyes suddenly glowed with a blood light, startling Han Li.

Chapter 449: Ruse

The Bone Sage's frightening red eyes shifted several times before their radiance gradually disappeared.

After the Bone Sage's eyes returned to normal, he calmly said, "Correct, the Ninecurl Spirit Ginseng really is here. Traces of its pure spiritual Qi can be faintly seen from the surface of the mountain."

Han Li's heart stirred. He poured spiritual power into his eyes and examined the small mountain with great attention. However, he was greatly disappointed to have found nothing unusual.

When the Bone Sage saw Han Li's eye shine with azure radiance, he obviously knew what he was doing. He disdainfully smiled and said, "Don't delude yourself into thinking you can see the pure spiritual Qi of the Ninecurl Spirit Ginseng. Only Nascent Soul cultivators possess a sufficiently powerful spiritual sense to be able to do this. Although my cultivation has shifted to the Ghost Dao, the power of my original spiritual sense hasn't suffered in the slightest." The Bone Sage's words carried a trace of mockery.

Han Li's face didn't reveal any change, but under the Bone Sage's unintentional advice, he started to circulate the Great Development Technique in his body.

After a short moment, Han Li rejoiced. He actually caught sight of extremely faint traces of azure light scattered throughout the mountain.

Not aware that Han Li could clearly see the pure spiritual Qi, the Bone Sage looked down at the mountain and indifferently said, “As I have been here before, I fortunately have a method of acquiring the Ninecurl Spirit Ginseng. As a result, I acquired a few particular items from a small island along the way. We will first arrange a trap. Then, we’ll have the Ninecurl Spirit run into it, allowing it to be easily captured.” He then extended his hand towards his storage pouch and took out a dazzling gold item.

“This is?” Han Li looked on with amazement.

The egg-sized golden ball of thread released a faint radiance as if it had been specially refined.

The Bone Sage scoffed at Han Li’s bewildered expression and clutched the ball. With a flash of black light, long golden threads shot out from the ball and quickly wove themselves into a small, exquisite gold net. It was only the size of his palm, but its sparkling shine gave an unusual impression.

The Bone Sage stared at Han Li and solemnly said, “The Ninecurl Spirit Ginseng is something that can only be caught with an object of pure gold. Other magic treasures and tools will be completely ineffective. Take proper care of this. It will be used to catch the spirit ginseng when it tries to flee.”

Han Li raised his brow and pondered for a moment before silently beckoning to the gold net. Woosh. The net flew into his hand, and he placed it into his storage pouch without a further

glance.

When the Bone Sage saw this, his eyes smiled. With a flip of his hand, he took out four earth-yellow flags. The small flags were layered with talisman markings that concealed their flickering brilliance.

“Yi!” With Han Li’s current mastery of formation flags, he was startled by the site of the small flag. After taking a cold breath, he revealed a trace of disbelief.

“What? Han Li, my boy, you recognize these flags?” When the Bone Sage saw Han Li’s astonishment, he couldn’t help but feel surprised.

Han Li didn’t immediately reply and rigidly stared at the small formation flags for a moment more. He then raised his head and solemnly said, “Is that the [Celestial Black Tortoise](#) formation flag setup set? Apart from this ancient formation spell, no other formations are able to form a great earth-attribute formation from four small flags.”

Surprise flashed across the Bone Sage’s face, but he soon regained his calm. “I hadn’t expected you to be proficient in the Dao of Formation Spells. It seems that I’ve found the right person to be my assistant. You’re correct, these Celestial Black Tortoise formation flags were something I had refined on the way here. With this formation, we will be able to restrict the mountain stone in an area of a hundred meters, hardening it into metal and trapping the Ninecurl Spirit Ginseng. Since you possess knowledge of formation spells, I’ll let you place down the formation. While

you do that, I will be looking around for any solid traces of the Spirit Ginseng.”

Soon after, he calmly handed over the four yellow flags and turned into a black cloud as he silently flew down towards the mountain.

Han Li looked at the flags in his hand and then turned to look at the back of the old devil with an odd expression in his eyes. After a moment, he licked his lips and flew downwards with a sneer.

At the same time, a man’s resounding voice was heard from deep within the Bone Sage’s body.

‘Bone Sage, why did you give him the formation flags? I see that your relationship with is quite shallow. Could it be that you’re up to no good?’ This person spoke as if he greatly understood the Bone Sage.

‘What do you mean? I only had Youngster Han set down the formation flags so that I can capture the spirit ginseng with certainty. After taking advantage of this opportunity, I will kill him.’ The Bone Sage sinisterly spoke with a chilling voice.

‘You’re going to kill him now? Did I hear wrongly? I thought you’d at least wait until Zenith Yin was killed before you acted against him!’ The deep man’s voice displayed astonishment.

The Bone Sage grimly said, ‘That won’t do. This Youngster Han

is far too cunning. I fear any more delays will only bring more troubles. In addition, this person understands my methods and will not allow himself to be controlled by me. If he were to by chance betray me to my traitorous disciple Zenith Yin, it would be beyond terrible. Although the possibility of this is low, this Bone Sage refuses to take such a risk! After all, I've already suffered betrayal once and will never easily trust others ever again. Also...'

The man's voice lazily continued, 'Also, you never intended to give the Ninecurl Spirit Ginseng to him from the start!'

'That's right! After spending so much thought into acquiring this spiritual item, how could I be willing to give it to another? Even if the Spirit Ginseng had no effect on my cultivation, it would prove equally useful for trade. And with that Gold Lightning Bamboo magic treasure in his possession, he will inevitably become a great enemy for us demon ghosts. The sooner we exterminate him, the better. Besides, what do you think about his body?' The Bone Sage revealed a sinister expression as he spoke.

The question at the end had startled the male ghost. He grew immensely excited. 'It would be great! You must help me seize his body! But, how do you plan to deal with Zenith Yin?' His question was slightly hesitant.

'When I passed down Zenith Yin's Profound Yin Art to him, I left behind a flaw that I could use to kill and refine him. So long as he is alone, and with your newly acquired body, we will be able to exterminate him.' The Bone Sage spoke with great confidence.

'So that's how it is! But weren't you thinking of exterminating

the Youngster Han from the start? You still deliberately sought to ally yourself with him despite this? You really are a cunning fox!’ The man seemed to hold the Bone Sage’s cunning in high regard.

‘You overestimate me. Before I came across you, I truly wished to join hands with him to kill Zenith Yin. After all, even if I know the flaw in my traitorous disciple’s cultivation, having an assistant will be far more reliable. But now that I came across an old friend like you, I no longer have need of him. It would be better to kill him as soon as possible and prevent any mishaps later.’ The Bone Sage nonchalantly said.

‘You’ve put on quite the display! I had truly believed your apprehensive appearance at the jade pavilions. I didn’t expect you were already planning to kill this required helper of yours.’ The man sighed and spoke with a complicated tone.

‘Humph! My worry at the time was genuine. However, I didn’t fear the loss of assistance for my revenge but that his Gold Lightning Bamboo flying swords had fallen into someone else’s hands. If such an event came to pass, it would prove to be disastrous to those of us following the Ghost Dao.’

After a moment of silence, the man asked with concern, ‘You dare to so recklessly act against him even though he possess a Gold Lightning Bamboo magic treasure? Are you truly certain of victory?’ As this matter pertained to himself, he naturally wanted to know the finer details.

At that moment, the Bone Sage was flying circles around the mountain at a low altitude.

‘What I originally imagined was that we’d use both the golden net and the Celestial Black Tortoise Formation to seize both the spirit ginseng and that Youngster Han at once. I hadn’t expected that he’d be proficient in spell formations. It was then that I was struck with a clever idea. I would hand the formation flags to him and have my plan become even more perfect.’ The Bone Sage revealed a strange smile and spoke with a mysterious tone.

‘Could it be that you’ve done something to the flags?’ The man spoke with sudden realization.

‘Hehe! You’ll know when the time comes. For now, we’ll find the Ninecurl Spirit Ginseng. Otherwise, that youngster definitely won’t be fooled.’ The Bone Sage deliberately omitted the main details, much to the man’s dissatisfaction.

‘Nevertheless, my ghost demon cultivation art was something that you had imparted to me. I had originally thought to use it to search for the spirit ginseng, but I hadn’t expected that my traitorous disciple would betray me. It has become my last hope!’ The Bone Sage’s eyes flashed with cold light.

‘I wasn’t really imparting anything. We were just taking what we needed.’ The man spoke with a deep sigh.

Specifically references to the constellation,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Tortoise.

Chapter 450: Revealing One's True Nature

‘Enough, don’t speak any more nonsense. First, you’ll help me find the Ninecurl Spirit Ginseng. Then, we’ll kill the youngster and give his body to you.’ The Bone Sage coldly interrupted him.

‘That will be no problem! With our great spirit searching arts, finding that lone spirit ginseng will be a trivial matter.’ The man disdainfully said.

‘Then let us go!’ With that said, the Bone Sage’s expression grew heavy, and he flung his sleeve downwards.

Two threads of black Qi shot out from his sleeve. In an instant, they had bored into the earth and disappeared from sight. At the same time, a strange dim green light streaked down from the Bone Sage before quickly fading away. Motionlessly floating in place, the Bone Sage closed his eyes.

Down on the ground, Han Li was playing around with the yellow formation flags with a calm expression. However, his gaze continuously flickered as if he were pondering a problem. Hesitation could be seen from his brow.

With a flick of his hand, the flags flew off as streaks of yellow light, firmly inserting themselves into the ground.

“Although I couldn’t find anything wrong with the formation flags, did you truly believe I wouldn’t suspect anything?” Han Li muttered to himself with a smirk.

Soon after, he reached towards his treasure pouch, and took out over ten yellow flags that bore a similar appearance and emitted dense earth Qi.

A strange expression flashed across Han Li's eyes as he glanced at the small flags flickering with light.

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The Bone Sage's expression stirred, and he suddenly opened his eyes.

The two threads of black Qi and the green light shot up from the ground and quickly reentered the Bone Sage's body.

‘Found it. The Ninecurl Spirit Ginseng sure knows how to hide. It concealed its true body in the groove of a huge stone. Were I not careful, it would’ve been difficult to spot.’ The man proudly said.

‘Good! I will go and see whether that youngster finished setting down the formation. Conceal yourself and be careful. Don’t just appear as you wish and allow him to discover you.’ The Bone Sage solemnly exhorted.

‘Be at ease. My disguise technique can only be detected with the spiritual sense of a Nascent Soul cultivator. In the coming moments, if you are unable to restrain him, don’t rely on me for help. His Gold Lightning Bamboo’s Divine Devilbane Lightning is

particularly lethal to bodiless souls such as I.' The man spoke of the ugly matters upfront.

'Humph! I don't need your help to deal with an early Core Formation junior. I naturally hold complete certainty in dealing with him. Also, you need not fear his Divine Devilbane Lightning. A few days ago, he had discharged his flying swords in battle. Any remaining lightning in his magic treasures should've been exhausted in dealing with the ghost mist. As for when we had originally fought, he had released a swarm of gold-silver beetles, much to my dismay. Despite my great experience, I am unable to recognize them, strangely enough. Although I don't know specifically what these spiritual insects are, they should be fiercer than common insects!' The Bone Sage spoke with an indifferent expression.

'Oh! Without the Divine Devilbane Lightning, he will pose no threat to me. I will act in accordance to how things play out.' The man let out a breath of relief.

The Bone Sage smirked and didn't say anything else. Although the Bone Sage held onto a sliver of the man's life essence, he knew it was incapable of completely controlling him. As this ghost had immersed himself in the Ghost Dao for so many years, he was sure to be more experienced with the matters of soul restrictions than the Bone Sage was, and he was both willing and able to break free of his restrictions by risking severe damage to Origin Qi. As such, the Bone Sage was unwilling to threaten him.

After looking around, he turned into a black cloud and flew off in Han Li's direction.

A short moment later, he found Han Li and dropped down.

Although the land here could be considered to be level, it was overgrown with weeds. There was even a small forest of sparse large trees nearby.

The Bone Sage appeared before him and calmly asked, “Have you finished setting up the formation?”

“Of course I have! It’s over there.” Han Li leaned against a large tree and pointed behind him.

With an attentive glance, he saw a large quantity of earth spirit Qi fluctuations behind Han Li as expected.

The Bone Sage inwardly rejoiced and took out a jade box from his storage pouch. He then opened its lid in front of Han Li.

Han Li’s nose was assailed with a strong fishy scent as soon as it was opened. He immediately stood straight and held his breath. With an alert expression, he took a few steps back and suspiciously gazed at the Bone Sage. “What’s that?”

The Bone Sage spoke with an indifferent expression, “There is no need to be overly suspicious. This is the feces of an Orchid Musk Beast. Although it is rather unpleasant to us, the Ninecurl Spirit Ginseng is immensely attracted to its scent. So long as we place it into the formation, the Ninecurl Spirit Ginseng’s avatar will be

sure to search for it. After restraining its avatar, we'll be able to easily excavate the main body of the Spirit Ginseng. There will be no fear of it transforming and escaping."

"Orchid Musk Beast feces?" Han Li glanced at the jade box in the Bone Sage's hand.

He now saw it clearly. It was only a thumb-sized faint yellow lump. The intense smell it released greatly surprised Han Li.

He had heard of the Orchid Musk Beast before. It was a strange spirit beast raised by cultivators. It had an odd, fire-red horn that released a peculiar fragrance that placated souls, receiving much favor from cultivators as a result. He hadn't expected that its feces would prove to be so unpleasant. He was also completely dumbfounded that a spiritual object such as the Ninecurl Spirit Ginseng would be fond of it.

But after Han Li looked at the Bone Sage's indifferent expression, he widely smiled and said, "Senior, please place the item in the formation spell. I will go and examine the formation flags to ensure everything is properly in place. Afterwards, I will guard this place and seize its avatar. As for the Ninecurl Spirit Ginseng's true body, I will have to trouble Senior to fetch it." With that said, Han Li cupped his fist and walked into the forest behind him. With some unknown method, he soon disappeared without trace.

The Bone Sage was startled. He inwardly frowned as he looked at the earth spiritual Qi in the forest. After his mouth twitched, he raised his hand. A strange serpent of black Qi flew out and flew straight into the heart of the forest with the jade box in its mouth.

After placing down the jade box, it flew back towards him.

With that done, there was still no trace of Han Li, causing a grim expression to momentarily appear on his face. He immediately flew to the sky in silence.

‘What? Are you actually scared of your own trick, the formation flags that you gave him?’ The man’s mocking voice suddenly appeared in the Bone Sage’s mind.

‘Carefulness leads to no mistakes! I will first test the formation and see whether or not it is properly set up. Although the chance that he happened to possess earth attribute formation flags is miniscule, I cannot take the risk!’ The Bone Sage spoke without caring.

The man clicked his tongue, ‘If you were originally this careful, you wouldn’t have fallen to this degree. It seems you’ve learned your lesson about that great flaw of yours, old pal Bone Sage!’

The Bone Sage couldn’t make out whether he was sarcastic or truly praising him. With an inward snort, he didn’t pay any further attention to the man’s words.

The Bone Sage floated in the air and opened his hand. A yellow formation flag appeared in his grasp. This flag appeared similar to the four that he had given to Han Li but it was a bit shorter and appeared quite exquisite.

The Bone Sage glanced at the small flag and lightly shook it. The flag immediately released a faint yellow light. After it twirled in the Bone Sage's hand, it pointed down towards the forest.

The Bone Sage let out quiet breath, and his face revealed an evil smile. After putting away the small flag, he turned his gaze to the small mountain and flew off.

At that moment, Han Li had finally appeared from the forest.

Han Li's eyes coldly glinted as he watched the Bone Sage fly farther away. After his expression stirred, his body became blurred, leaving behind only a breeze. The fishy smell from the jade box was becoming increasingly potent, causing Han Li to tightly frown. All he could do was hold his breath.

As time passed, doubts began to spring into his heart. He couldn't stay there for long. If the Ninecurl Spirit Ginseng wasn't duped into appearing, he could only return in vain.

As Han Li was thinking this, his expression stirred. His spiritual sense detected a small object burst into the trees. Han Li was pleasantly surprised by this and immediately concealed his body's aura. He then stared at the jade box with complete attention.

A yellow light flashed. A sneaking rabbit was floating outside the formation spell. This rabbit's body was snow white and its blood-red eyes were swivelling incessantly, occasionally glancing around. It appeared extremely timid.

Despite this, the rabbit's pink nose was continuously sniffing in the direction of the jade box and would occasionally reveal a human-like expression of infatuation.

What was an extremely unpleasant odor to Han Li proved to be an extremely pleasurable one to this small creature.

Chapter 451: Two-Faced

There was no doubt. This small animal was certain to be the avatar of the Ninecurl Spirit Ginseng.

Han Li excitedly looked at the white rabbit and circulated the entirety of his Great Development Technique through his eyes. The white rabbit's pure spiritual Qi was astonishingly brilliant.

It was undoubtedly a wondrous item born from nature. Han Li felt deeply moved, but he didn't relax in the slightest. As he rigidly stared at the white rabbit, his hand had already formed an incantation seal.

The rabbit continued to stay outside the great formation before its two fire-red eyes glanced at the jade box several times. It was clearly unsatisfied with merely staying in place and continuing to only smell it. It was now coming up with a clever plan.

Now that he saw the rabbit's intelligence, Han Li became increasingly careful and revealed a tense expression. After all, the Ninecurl Spirit Ginseng was most adapt in evasion techniques. Were he not careful, he would've wasted all of his previous efforts.

After the rabbit circled around the large formation, its two ears swayed incessantly while still as if it were attempting to sense any oddities with the nearby spiritual Qi.

Han Li felt slightly worried. If the spirit ginseng avatar saw through the trap and wouldn't enter the formation, he would have

to forcefully capture it with the gold net. However, the chance of success would be pathetically small.

During Han Li's moment of hesitation, the white rabbit's body blurred and disappeared into the underbrush.

Han Li was left completely stupefied.

During Han Li's bafflement, a white blur appeared from a different side of the underbrush. The white rabbit's speed left incomplete afterimages. It shot towards the jade box in an instant. After grasping the jade box in its jaw, it ran back without the slightest hesitation.

Although the white rabbit's actions had left him in a slight daze, he immediately awoke. How could he allow its mere tricks to succeed?

An arrow-like ray of gold light shot down from the trees, intercepting the white rabbit's path of escape. The white rabbit fearfully twisted its body in mid flight and threw itself in a different direction.

It was already too late. A barrier of yellow light had already surrounded it, firmly sealing it. The white rabbit's head knocked against the light barrier and was repelled.

After rolling several times across the ground, it got up with a swaying head and eyes filled with panic. With a flash of white

light, it turned into a fist-sized ball of rainbow light and immediately flew downwards into the ground.

But when the ball of rainbow light sunk several inches into the ground, it was pushed back by another burst of yellow light.

Now it was truly worried. The rainbow ball of light flusteredly knocked against the light barrier like a housefly, but it was always met with resistance. At that moment, a streak of golden light shot down towards the ball of light while it was in midair. It was caught completely unprepared.

Then with a blur, Han Li appeared on the ground. The golden light then flew into his hand, revealing itself as the gold threaded net that the Bone Sage had given him.

The light turned back into the white rabbit while in the net, and it struggled to break free. Its figure became blurred, large, and small, but it proved to be of no use. The gold net closely matched its transformations, firmly holding it in place.

Han Li smiled at the sight. After he brought the gold net close to his face and closely examined the white rabbit, he hung the net at his waist. He then sat down at the center of the formation with no intention of disabling it. He then took out the flower basket desolate antiquity and placed it in front of him. He also released two spirit beast pouches of Gold Devouring Beetles and had them continuously spiral above him, forming a huge glowing cloud of gold and silver.

Han Li then calmly sat down and closed his eyes, waiting for the Bone Sage to bring back the main body of the Ninecurl Spirit Ginseng.

With all of this in place, Han Li hoped that this would tacitly tell the Bone Sage that it would be best to not shed all pretenses of cooperation and to sincerely hand the spirit ginseng over to him. He clearly understood that their cooperation would only persist so long as the Bone Sage believed that he wasn't weak. Naturally, if the Bone Sage showed any killing intent, Han Li would bluntly take the first move.

Regardless of whether or not the Ninecurl Spirit Ginseng truly possessed the miraculous effect of condensing a Nascent Soul, he was still determined to acquire it. After all, this spiritual item possessed great fame. He was convinced that even if it didn't hold any effect towards Nascent Soul formation, he was certain it still had other equally impressive uses.

With that thought, Han Li unconsciously opened his eyes and looked at the white rabbit at his waist, the avatar of the Ninecurl Spirit Ginseng.

He was left stunned. It completely lacked its previous vigor and had grown completely powerless.

Han Li's heart stirred. Its main body was certain to be in the Bone Sage's grasp. Otherwise, its avatar wouldn't appear so lifeless. Han Li then turned his gaze to the skies outside of the forest.

After the time it took to finish a meal, the Bone Sage eventually flew over as a dark cloud. He came to a stop outside the formation spell and wordlessly floated there.

Han Li expressionlessly stood up and stared at the dark cloud. He didn't plan on speaking first.

A long while later, the Bone Sage's bone-chilling voice came from the cloud, "You appear as if you're facing a great enemy. What are you planning?"

"Nothing. It's just that my cultivation is too low. I am truly scared of suddenly having a falling out with Senior." Han Li calmly replied.

"Humph! You really are overly suspicious! If I didn't plan on giving this spiritual item to you, then why would I bring you to such a far away place. Don't forget that I still need your help in dealing with my traitorous disciple!" The Bone Sage spoke as if he were suppressing anger.

"Senior, I'm not sure if you know, but times have changed! Perhaps Senior truly needed my help before entering the Heavenvoid Hall. But now, I'm not entirely sure that Senior hasn't already acquired another assistant." Han Li stared at the Bone Sage with a gaze sharp as a sword.

"What do you mean?" The Bone Sage's voice grew colder, and he faintly revealed an expression of shock.

Han Li frowned and impatiently said, “Senior doesn’t need to continue to feign ignorance. Why don’t you call out to him. I saw him appear when he was looking for the spirit ginseng.”

After hearing this, the Bone Sage grew silent. Not long after a man’s deep, unfamiliar voice came from within the cloud, “Youngster, how did you discover me? I cannot believe that you saw through my disguise technique.”

“I have no interest in answering a stranger. Now I will ask a question to Senior Bone Sage. Do you truly wish to fight in a battle where both sides suffer, only to the benefit of Zenith Yin?” Han Li spoke with a mocking expression.

“Both sides suffer? You truly overestimate yourself! Although killing you would consume a bit of effort, I am willing to pay the cost.” With that said the dark cloud suddenly shot out a streak of yellow light, striking the barrier of the formation spell.

The color of the barrier abruptly changed to a fiery red. The center of the formation spell began to release a scorching heat as if it were a furnace.

Han Li’s expression didn’t change upon seeing this, and he lightly sighed. He raised his hand and shot an azure incantation seal towards the barrier. The barrier’s color fluctuated many times between red and yellow before finally returning to its original yellow. The scorching heat had disappeared as if it were an illusion.

“Yi! What did you do to my formation flags?” A shocked voice came from the dark cloud.

“What did I do? I just did what you did!” Han Li spoke with a noncommittal tone.

“Humph! Very good. You’ve must also used my golden thread ball quite well then.” The Bone Sage tone turned icy.

“What!? Could it be!?” Han Li’s expression underwent a massive change. He immediately threw the gold threaded net from his waist into the distance.

But just as the Bone Sage finished speaking, the golden net turned pitch-black with a flash. It quickly shot towards Han Li as a fine thread of black Qi and hastily bound him. As for the rabbit that was within it, it was discarded to the side without regard. It remained motionless as if it were unconscious.

With this sudden entrapment, Han Li was unable to conceal the abrupt shock on his face.

“Youngster, how do you like the feeling of ghost threads? Are you still able to use any of the magic power in your body?” The Bone Sage’s proud laughter came from the cloud above.

When Han Li heard this, he hastily felt for his magic power, but his face soon turned ashen.

Chapter 452: Thunderous Strike

Han Li was incapable of drawing on any of the magic power in his body, feeling as if it were frozen. It was clear that those ghost threads had restricted his true essence.

Han Li was overwhelmed with shock for a moment. He hastily turned his gaze to examine the black threads. The black threads densely coiling around his body were glossy and emitted a faint Yin Qi. Its baneful nature was clear at a glance.

Han Li's face unconsciously twitched. It wasn't that he didn't suspect that it had been tampered with, but that after careful examination, he had been unable to find anything strange.

As he didn't carry any pure gold magic tools on hand, he had no choice to be use that item. After he used the item to capture the spirit ginseng's avatar, his suspicions about the item had been thrown to the back on his mind for the time being. It was beyond his imagination that just as they turned hostile that his magic power and true essence would be completely restrained.

However, his expression of shock only existed for a short moment before his calm was restored. That was because he immediately recalled that he still had the formation spell protecting him. He would have enough time to break free of the restrains before they could further act against him.

Han Li scoffed and thought to call out to his Gold Devouring beetles when he heard a puff from behind him.

The sound was barely discernable. If Han Li hadn't earlier covered the area of the formation spell with his spiritual sense, he feared he wouldn't have discovered it. Feeling a chill run down his spine, Han Li sharply whistled and instantly rolled his body over. At that same time, the Gold Devouring Beetles filled the skies as they swarmed behind him.

Upon hearing a loud explosion from behind him, Han Li's face grew gloomy.

Han Li saw the swarm of Gold Devouring Beetles blocking the path of a strange dark green silhouette of light and doing their utmost to attack it.

The green light silhouette appeared blurred from having its body covered in ghost Qi. Its arms had transformed into two huge, dark green pythons. They were wildly lashing out at any of the Gold Devouring Beetles that attempted to approach. As none of the beetles were able to approach him, the Gold Devouring Beetles were at a complete standstill.

But what Han Li found even more inconceivable was that the formation spell was still completely intact. Just how was it able to appear behind him without triggering any of the restrictions?

But before Han Li could recover from his shock, the green silhouette loudly cursed, "These damned insects are actually capable of consuming my incorporeal body. How menacing!" It was the same unfamiliar voice he had heard before, but now, it was

quite flustered.

Han Li had finally noticed that in the instant the beetles were flung away, they had taken bites out of green pythons and had swallowed specks of green light. It was no wonder why he was so perturbed.

In the mere time after it had just recently spoke from within the cloud, it had managed to conceal itself behind him and launch a sneak attack. Han Li was completely perplexed by this but the question soon faded from his mind. Now was not the time to think of it.

He had no mind to chat with the silhouette and whistled once more. A small portion of the Gold Devouring Beetles separated themselves from the group and shot towards him. They were crawling all over his body, tearing away at the black threads.

Because his magic power was restricted, Han Li was only able to barely control the Gold Devouring Beetles by use of sound. He needed to set himself free before the enemy figured out a way to deal with his Gold Devouring Beetles. After all, the memory of the beetles' Origin Qi being greatly damaged by the ghostly roars were still fresh in his mind. If such a thing were to occur again, it would be terrible.

At that moment, the barrier seemed to be rammed by a heavy object. After flickering with yellow light, the light barrier started to blur.

Han Li then indifferently glanced over. He saw the Bone Sage in midair, releasing his own attacks in coordination with the green silhouette's attack.

The dark cloud continuously struck the light barrier with three-meter-wide masses of black Qi. It appeared that the barrier wouldn't last for much longer.

A strange light stirred in Han Li's eyes. He no longer paid attention to the Bone Sage's assault and turned his gaze to the Gold Devouring Beetles that were blocking the flourishing green silhouette over forty meters away.

The Yin ghost threads on his body had already been torn nearly halfway through in that instant. Han Li could already feel his true essence and magic power slowly stir, causing him to involuntarily reveal a trace of joy.

Once his magic power returned to normal, he had many methods he could make use of.

At that moment, the green silhouette released a soft roar and started spinning its body. In a second, it had turned into a huge top spinning at great speed. It charged into the swarm of beetles and slowly inched closer to Han Li.

The ten thousand Gold Devouring Beetles continued to chase after it. Although a majority were quickly swatted away by the huge top, a small portion of them managed to cling onto it and slow it down.

When the other beetles saw this, they swarmed around it. A short moment later, the green silhouette had Gold Devouring Beetles crawling over its body and was no longer capable of spinning. It looked just like when they had devoured the grey ghost shadow previously.

Han Li was astonished. The green ghost's suicidal action not only caused him to feel joy, but also great apprehension. What happened afterwards verified his suspicions.

In a breath's time, the green shadow's body that was being held down by the Gold Devouring Beetles started to inflate into a large sphere and glow with dazzling green radiance.

'Not good!' Han Li wanted to recall the Gold Devouring Beetles, but it was too late. The green sphere emitted a deafening bang and released an extremely cold aura that submerged all of the beetles.

The center of this explosion was shining with dazzling green radiance. Under it as cover, a fine wisp of green smoke shot out, quickly shooting towards the still bound Han Li.

"Your body will be mine!" With roaring laughter, the green thread flashed, transforming into a meter wide malevolent ghost head as it continued to charge towards him.

As the Bone Sage saw this from up above, he wore a slight smile. He immediately stopped his attacks, despite being only a few strikes away from breaking through it.

Han Li stared at the ghost head as it approached him with an icy, piercing gaze. When it arrived about three meters away from him, a ruthless glint appeared in his eyes and his body suddenly released a violent, baleful aura.

This violent, baleful aura appeared nearly tangible, and unexpectedly stopped the approaching ghost head from shock.

Han Li suddenly opened his mouth and shot a dense bolt of golden lightning, penetrating through the ghost head at point blank. The ghost head wailed in anguish and immediately turned into a ball of green Qi after being struck by the golden lightning. Furiously shrieking, it fled for its life.

Han Li wasn't about to allow it to so easily escape. At that moment, his entire body was wildly releasing arcs of faint lightning. In an instant, the black threads had been thoroughly dispersed.

His body blurred without delay. After leaving behind several afterimages, he had chased down the green Qi.

Han Li expressionlessly raised his right hand and fiercely clutched the ball of Qi. Faint gold lightning sparked from his fingers and instantly erased the green Qi from existence, leaving a dark green crystal pearl in his grasp. It flickered with a strange brilliance as if it were alive.

Han Li indifferently looked at it for a moment before tightly

closing his hand. The crystal pearl was then turned to ash from an arc of lightning.

Without a corporeal body, even the ghost king grade green shadow was destroyed in an instant by Han Li's unrestrained use of the Divine Devilbane Lightning. Even Han Li himself was surprised by how easy it had been.

Then, Han Li raised his head and looked at the Bone Sage with an unphased expression, "Hand over the Ninecurl Spirit Ginseng to me and I will pretend as if nothing happened, and we will continue our cooperation. Otherwise, one of us will have to die!" Although Han Li's tone was serene, the cold intent of his words caused the Bone Sage to wear a grotesque grimace.

The Bone Sage directly stared at Han Li for a long while before saying, "Good! Good! Good!"

Han Li unconsciously narrowed his eyes as he rigidly stared at him.

"Since he was unable to take over your body, his skill was insufficient. I will naturally cooperate with the victor. Take good care of the Ninecurl Spirit Ginseng." The dark cloud concealing the Bone Sage disappeared to reveal his true body. He then flung a golden box at Han Li.

Chapter 453: Zenith Yin's Intrusion

Han Li expressionlessly watched the box rebound off of the light barrier and fall to the ground outside. He didn't have the slightest intention of releasing the restrictions. He only solemnly stared at the gold box in complete silence.

With his hands behind his back, the Bone Sage serenely spoke, "What? You fear that that the box is under the effect of ghost thread alterations? Relax. This old ghost has already given up. I can no longer act against you as I only have you left to assist me with Zenith Yin. The large number of Gold Lightning Bamboo magic treasures that are contained within your body were particularly outside of my expectations. They will prove to be extremely effective when dealing with Zenith Yin's Profound Yin Arts. Harming you at this point would be harming myself."

Han Li focused his sights on the Bone Sage. If he plotted against him once, he would naturally be willing to do it again for reasons still unknown. Although his words and actions were agreeable, it was best for him to remain vigilant.

With that thought, Han Li raised his arm and shot a slim arc of faint gold lightning, striking the gold box with shock. After swaying several times, no odd transformations had occurred.

Han Li let out a sigh of relief. If the box was transformed from something demonic, it would've undoubtedly shown a reaction.

With his heart at ease, he beckoned to the box and the gold case

shot towards him. At that same moment, the light barrier flickered, allowing the gold box to pass through the in that instant.

Han Li saw that the Bone Sage still had yet to move with his spiritual sense and had somewhat relaxed. He then lowered his head to look at the gold box.

With a cold glint shining from his eyes, Han Li stared at the box in his hands, contemplating about something.

When the Bone Sage saw Han Li's cautious appearance, he scoffed and leisurely watched from above without any intention of urging him.

Han Li then looked down at the avatar of the spirit ginseng, the white rabbit. It was motionlessly lying on the ground as if it were unconscious.

Han Li muttered to himself for a moment. Then without any further hesitation, he gently flipped the cover of the gold box, revealing a sudden azure light shining from the box. The box then fully opened the rest of the way by itself and revealed what was inside.

Han Li hastily focused his gaze on the small item before him. It was half a foot long and an earthy yellow with dry, wrinkled skin appearing like one would commonly expect from the roots of an old tree.

Han Li was speechless.

While Han Li was doubting whether this truly was the Ninecurl Spirit Ginseng or whether the Bone Sage had replaced some unknown item to dupe him with, the motionless rabbit that was lying on the ground suddenly leapt towards him as an orb of white light, shooting towards the roots in the golden box.

Han Li was initially surprised but he soon revealed joy.

The Ninecurl Spirit Ginseng's white rabbit avatar's sudden actions clearly revealed that this item was truly the Ninecurl Spirit Ginseng, causing him to feel assured.

However, Han Li wasn't about to just ignore this avatar and allow it to fuse with its main body. He flicked his finger, striking the rabbit's head with a streak of azure swordlight. It tumbled off a distance away.

But with its true body before its eyes, it leapt forward again with the entirety of its strength, completely unwilling to give up.

Han Li grew somewhat impatient. He immediately shot off an arc of lightning, thoroughly knocking out the white rabbit. A large patch of its fur had turned black.

Afterwards, Han Li reached in the direction of the white rabbit, causing it to fly into his hand. After taking a look at it, he decided to place it into the golden box.

Once the white rabbit avatar touched the body of the Ninecurl Spirit Ginseng, it merged into the ginseng with a flash of white light. Han Li then closed the lid and placed a minor restriction on it to prevent it from fleeing.

With that done, Han Li released a breath of true relief.

The Bone Sage's inaction caused Han Li to feel relaxed, but it had increased his wariness as well.

After placing the golden box into his storage pouch, he calmly asked, "After Senior gave the Ninecurl Spirit Ginseng to this Junior, did he not fear that Junior would take it and run?"

The Bone Sage's wandering gaze focused on Han Li. He unhurriedly said, "Run? Even with the ginseng, what would you think to do without the formula to refine it?"

Han Li frowned and thought about what else he should say.

The Bone Sage sneered and couldn't help but explain, "Zenith Yin has already acted on your body. You can either be pursued to the ends of the earth or cooperate with me. Even if you left the Heavenvoid Hall with the spirit ginseng, Zenith Yin would later... hehe!"

"Acted on me?" Han Li's expression momentarily changed. He didn't believe that his body could be affected by something

without his knowledge, given his immense spiritual sense.

The Bone Sage naturally guessed that Han Li doubted this and immediately smirked. But just as he was about to offer evidence, his expression abruptly changed, and he turned his gaze to the distance.

Han Li was baffled by this, but he immediately felt alarm swell in his mind. He couldn't help but believe the old devil had sought to trick him.

But for some unknown reason, the Bone Sage hastily turned back around and said something that caused Han Li to immediately tense.

“Zenith Yin is coming. Most likely for you. You're on your own! I am going to conceal myself.” The Bone Sage then turned into a dark cloud and flew off, disappearing in an instant.

Han Li was dumbstruck!

Just as he was pondering whether or not the Bone Sage spoke truthfully, he heard booming, ghostly wails from the horizon. A huge sea of dense black clouds imposingly covered the skies. It appeared that they were heading in this direction!

Han Li's heart dropped!

This dark cloud possessed the astonishing pressure of the

Profound Yin Arts. It was most likely that the person who was coming was Grandmaster Zenith Yin. Could it be true that Zenith Yin had schemed against him without his detection? How else could Grandmaster Zenith Yin have flown such a far distance towards him with complete accuracy.

At that moment, Han Li inwardly rained profanities at the Bone Sage. Wasn't he going on about wanting to cooperate with him to deal with Zenith Yin?! Now, he was left behind, abandoned with great speed. This caused Han Li to be beyond gloomy.

Now that he had hid, it was too late for Han Li. He could only brace himself to cope with this directly.

As Han Li remained inside the formations spell, the black clouds arrived above the forest in the blink of an eye and came to a sudden stop.

With this, Han Li no longer had any choice. He could only silently stare at the dark clouds with a tense heart. He believed that Zenith Yin wouldn't kill him on sight and would be given a proper explanation of why Grandmaster Zenith Yin was so intent on pursuing him. After a long while of strenuous thinking, Han Li couldn't figure out why he was being chased, much to his annoyance!

With that thought, Han Li recovered his calm state of mind and he attentively gazed at the black clouds, waiting for Zenith Yin to speak.

But contrary to his expectations, a cold snort came from the dark clouds and shot out a jet-black light beam towards the magic formation at a speed greater than lightning.

With a flash of yellow light, the light barrier was thoroughly destroyed with a deafening rupture. It was unable to hold for even a second.

Completely unobstructed, the black light beam directly struck at Han Li. Han Li's face became deathly pale in an instant. His body blurred several times out of instinct and he dodged out of the way, appearing over a hundred meters away with an expression of furious alarm.

Han Li waved his arms without any further hesitation. Over a hundred huge ape puppets appeared around him. He then twirled several spirit beast pouches around him, having them lightly sway in front of him.

Han Li's gaze grew ice-cold. Although he knew his chances of victory were pathetically small, if Zenith Yin truly wished to kill him, he still had to try his utmost! He was unwilling to resign himself to death!

At that same time, nine Bamboo Cloudswarm swords that were sealed in his body's true essence began to stir.

Chapter 454: Enticement

The expansive black clouds appeared to be reacting to Han Li's hostile vigilance. They started to quickly swiveled and started pulling back at the center of the clouds with a grand flourish of devilish Qi.

Han Li's heart trembled. Just as he was about to impatiently order his puppets to attack, he heard the Bone Sage's cold voice in his ear.

"Youngster, don't attack him. He is merely giving you a show of his strength. He doesn't wish to truly kill you. Let's see what my traitorous disciples wants from you, before you do anything else!"

The Bone Sage's voice transmission surprised Han Li, giving him a sudden realization. He then forcefully suppressed the restlessness in his heart and asked, "Great Senior Zenith Yin, for what reason has Senior come to find this Junior?" Han Li's voice was gloomy and serene, possessing neither arrogance nor humbleness.

"You're still calm despite receiving my attack. It seems you are quite courageous." Grandmaster Zenith Yin answer was besides the point. Han Li was unsure whether his words were that of praise or contempt.

"As a Nascent Soul cultivator, if Senior wishes to exterminate Junior, my courage wouldn't make a difference." Han Li unconsciously frowned and replied with a calm expression. He felt slightly more at ease, knowing that the Bone Sage was hiding not

far away.

If he were to act together with the old devil who knew the weakness of the Profound Yin Arts, it would be possible to fight against Zenith Yin. Naturally, that would require the Bone Sage to assist him, which was something Han Li couldn't guarantee. As a result, he didn't possess the slightest intention of angering the Bone Sage.

At that moment, the black clouds eventually billowed away and flashed several times. Woosh. The clouds disappeared to reveal a middle-aged man and a short, thin, and ugly youth — Zenith Yin and Wu Shou.

“You are Han Li, a rogue cultivator from Heavenly Star City?” The middle aged man looked at Han Li with interest.

“That's correct. I am Han Li, although it seems Senior already knows this.” Han Li revealed a bitter smile and spoke with a tone of helplessness.

“Don't be anxious, I'm not here to look for trouble. It's not about that matter with the Exquisite Sound Sect either. The previous attack was merely because I felt that formation spell was in the way, so I sought to break it.” Zenith Yin spoke with an indifferent smile.

‘What was in the way? Did you not merely wish to intimidate me with your immense strength?’ Han Li thought, completely aware of the truth. But contrarily, he respectfully asked, “Then, Senior is

here for...?”

As Han Li clearly understood that Zenith Yin was waiting for him to ask that, he could only hold his nose and play along.

Zenith Yin chuckled upon hearing Han Li’s question. After closely examining Han Li, he was able to sense his inward restlessness.

“Do you recognize what this is?” Zenith Yin raised his hand, revealing a dense white ball. Without giving him a chance to clearly see what it was, he lightly tossed it towards Han Li.

Han Li revealed slight confusion. When the item flew in front of him, he caught it with his sleeve and carefully brought it before his eyes.

The item wasn’t large and was badly damaged, but Han Li recognized it at a glance. It was a small amount of the pure white threads from the Bloodjade Spiders.

Han Li blankly stared at it, baffled at why Zenith Yin had given this to him. But after some thought, he immediately recalled the battle that had occurred with the Hidden Fiend Sect. When he was trying to escape the entrapment, he had used the Bloodjade spiders to deal with a demon corpse that was blocking his path. That should’ve been when Zenith Yin had acquired this object.

‘Why is he asking about this item now?’ Han Li’s expression

slightly changed as suspicions began to come to mind.

However, as Zenith Yin wasn't going to give him much time to think, he could only answer honestly, "I undoubtedly recognize this item. They're threads that my spirit beast shoot out. Why has Senior mentioned this?" Han Li's expression was doubtful as if he couldn't bring himself to believe it.

Zenith Yin revealed a smile upon hearing this.

"Good, very good! I came to look for you because I wish to see your spirit beasts. How about you take them out and let this Grandmaster take a look at them?" Grandmaster Zenith Yin revealed a trace of excitement and spoke with a surprisingly gently voice.

This caused Han Li to grow even more vigilant. This was because Han Li had caught a trace of well-concealed greed contained in his smile. It was only revealed for an instant before it faded away.

Showing such an expression at the mention of his Bloodjade Spiders wasn't a good omen by any means. Although he felt even more restless underneath Grandmaster Zenith Yin's gaze, Han Li could only hesitantly force himself to agree.

'Well, no point in dragging this out!', Han Li gloomily thought.

He then raised his arm and lightly patted the spirit beast pouch at his waist. A white light then flew out and landed in front of Han Li.

The light faded away to reveal a white spider the size of a millstone, fiercely observing its surroundings.

When Zenith Yin saw the Bloodjade Spider, he continuously stared at it as if it were an extremely precious treasure. His expression gradually became happier.

“Great! It truly is a Bloodjade Spider! Hehe...” After a long while, Grandmaster Zenith Yin broke into wild laughter as he faced the sky, causing the nearby air to tremble. Han Li’s expression involuntarily changed. The cultivation of a Nascent Soul cultivator was truly profound!

However, Han Li soon wore a cautious expression. He knew that Zenith Yin was about to mention the true heart of the problem.

But before Grandmaster Zenith Yin could speak, the Bone Sage’s apprehensive voice was transmitted to Han Li’s ear.

“How did you get that Bloodjade Spider? Why haven’t you told me about this?” The Bone Sage’s voice was filled with regret and furious alarm.

“Why would I have told you that I possessed it?” Han Li grew sullen.

But he immediately calmed his mind and had second thoughts. Since the Bone Sage was also moved by it, it seems the Bloodjade Spider possessed a great mystery. Would the appearance of this

unknown matter prove to be a benefit or detriment to him?

As Han Li was inwardly mulling this over, the Bone Sage urgently sent him another voice transmission, “That traitorous disciple Zenith Yin will definitely invite you to go with him into the Inner Halls. Do not hesitate to go with him. I will be secretly following after you and provide assistance.” Perhaps sensing that Han Li’s tone was unsettled, the Bone Sage’s voice became much more gentle.

When Han Li heard this, his heart became even more uneasy, contrary to the Bone Sage’s intentions. He faintly felt that he was about to be dragged into a great maelstrom where he would meet a terrible death if he weren’t careful.

As these suspicions stirred in Han Li’s mind, Zenith Yin eventually spoke as the Bone Sage had predicted, “Han Li, do you wish to go to the Inner Halls? If you do, I will bring you through safely!” Zenith Yin voice was amiable and his words were filled with great enticement.

“Go to the Inner Halls?” Han Li was astonished.

It was a place that was said to be too dangerous for a Core Formation cultivator, but the treasures that it contained were far more precious than in other areas of the Heavenvoid Hall. But after Han Li came to know of the particulars of that place, he had decided not to go. He was even more averse to braving the dangers of the Inner Hall now that he had just acquired the Ninecurl Spirit Ginseng, an item that greatly helped when congealing a Nascent Soul.

Zenith Yin's offer to safely bring him through the Inner Halls, and the Bone Sage's exhortations for him to agree were met with complete disdain and distrust from Han Li.

He only had one life, after all!

After a moment more of pondering, Han Li declined with a forced smile, "To this Junior, the Inner Halls are truly out of reach. Junior will be satisfied with passing only two trials. As such, Junior will forgo going to the Inner Halls. His luck isn't that good!"

Grandmaster Zenith Yin's expression sank, and his eyes became stern.

At his side, Wu Chou loudly rebuked him with a scowl, "Han Li, my ancestor didn't chase after you for your offenses during that previous matter. Now, you use excuses to refuse his kind offer to bring you into the Inner Halls. Could it be that you hold our Zenith Yin Island in contempt?"

Although Grandmaster Zenith Yin didn't stop Wu Chou, he wore a displeased expression and looked at Wu Chou with a cold gaze.

Han Li grew silent once more. He again heard the Bone Sage exhort him to agree, causing even more distrust to swell in his heart.

“I won’t go. Although I do not know why Island Lord Wu plans on bringing me into the Inner Halls, it definitely won’t be a matter of only broadening my experiences. It would be better for me to use my time to look for treasures in safer areas.” Han Li spoke with an indifferent expression.

Chapter 455: Another Surprise

“Humph! Do you truly believe that you get to decide whether or not you go? If you don’t go with us, this young lord will kill you here. Did you truly believe that our Zenith Yin Island wouldn’t dare to act due to the words of the Star Palace enforcers?” Wu Chou’s small eyes ominously glinted.

Although Wu Chou had been previously warned by Grandmaster Zenith Yin, he still attempted to threateningly pressure Han Li. Wu Chou felt Han Li was truly displeasing to the eye. The malice he felt towards Han Li was nearly innate, born from no particular reason.

Han Li found this feeling mutual. That recent outburst was merely met with an indifferent glance. Paying no further heed to Wu Chou, he spoke to Grandmaster Zenith Yin, “For a reason unknown to me, Senior requires this Junior’s spirit beast. But this Junior is also well aware that if a spirit beast’s master dies, their spirit beasts are incapable of recognizing another master. In addition, Junior is capable of ordering the Bloodjade Spider to self detonate during a moment of crisis. Surely, Senior doesn’t wish to see that!”

Han Li clearly understood that Wu Chou was merely playing the part of a paper tiger. As such Han Li was unwilling to tango with Wu Chou and decided to speak with the true authority, Grandmaster Zenith Yin.

However, this action by Han Li caused Wu Chou to fly into a rage from the humiliation. After a hostile expression appeared on his

face, he spewed a slew of profanities at Han Li. But he was soon stopped by a wave from Zenith Yin, “Good, I am fond of Juniors with courage and understanding. Since this island lord requires your Bloodjade Spider, I naturally won’t drag you along without payment. Once we arrive in the Inner Halls, I will...”

Just as Zenith Yin was about to list his conditions, his expression suddenly grew sullen and he stopped speaking. He turned his head around to fiercely stare in a certain direction with a malicious look on his face.

“Let this Grandmaster have a look at you, eavesdropper!” Grandmaster Zenith Yin’s voice was shrill and full of killing intent. He appeared extremely angry.

Han Li felt alarmed. He immediately thought that the Bone Sage had been discovered and was unconsciously pondering about how he should deal with this situation.

However, Han Li was surprised to hear an aged voice.

“Old Pal Wu, there is no need to be so angry. I merely encountered you by coincidence. Don’t tell me you’re going to attack?” A hundred meters away in the air floated a Confucian-robed old man covered in an azure glowing light.

It was someone Grandmaster Zenith Yin was quite familiar with, Layman Qing Yi!

“Fellow Daoist Qing! You followed me!” When Zenith Yin saw him, he grimaced, and his killing intent faded.

“What? Follow you? I was merely taking a stroll and happened to see Fellow Daoist Wu and this young Junior having a chat. So I thought I’d come over and say hi. I didn’t think that I’d cause Fellow Daoist Wu to be so unhappy. Sigh, had I known earlier, I definitely wouldn’t have acted so rashly.” The Confucian-robed old man dryly laughed and spoke with a completely unconcerned tone.

He soon grew unconcerned with keeping up his own pretences and turned his gaze from the pale Zenith Yin to the Bloodjade Spider.

“Tch tch. This is a Bloodjade Spider? It is a truly rare spirit beast. From the analysis of earlier cultivators, this is one of the spirit beasts that are most likely capable of acquiring the Heavenvoid Cauldron. Its odds are far greater than your Fire Serpent or Wan Tianming’s Gold Threaded Silkworm.” Layman Qing Yi spoke, shaking his head.

‘Taking a stroll nearby? While invisible?’ After hearing the old man’s shameless excuse, Grandmaster Zenith Yin grew furious. But his expression only grew gloomier upon hearing Qing Yi reveal the secret about the Bloodjade Spider.

After turning his gaze away from the Bloodjade Spiders, the Confucian-robed scholar examined Han Li several times before saying, “So this is the Junior that Old Pal Wu was concerned with earlier. This old man is also quite fond of guiding courageous and insightful youngsters. I am quite interested in taking taking him in

as my disciple. How about it? I've never taken in a disciple before." Zenith Yin paled after hearing this.

"Take Junior in a disciple?" Han Li blinked several times. He didn't know whether he should be excited or cynical.

Zenith Yin's expression was icy, and threads of black Qi began to surge from his body. He spoke each of his words forcefully while staring at the old man, "Fellow Daoist Qing, what are you planning?"

"Hehe! I was only joking! Old Pal Zenith Yin doesn't need to be so nervous. If I were to truly take this youngster as a disciple, I fear Fellow Daoist would attack me without restraint. However, if Hu Manzi were to know of this Bloodjade Spider, would he back down?" The old man chuckled. A strange expression appeared within his eyes as he played the matter off.

Layman Qing Yi's words initially caused Zenith Yin to relax. But upon hearing him mention Man Huzi, he started to feel a strong headache.

Zenith Yin had originally planned to keep the Bloodjade Spider a secret and manipulate the others into driving the Righteous Dao cultivators away from the Inner Halls or have both sides suffer a mutual defeat. He would then use the fire serpent to put on a display of being incapable of acquiring the treasure while secretly using Han Li's Bloodjade Spider to secure it. He alone would acquire the Heavenvoid Cauldron. As for his previous promises, he had never intended on keeping them in the first place.

But he didn't expect in the slightest that his meticulous plan would be thrown into disarray by this old cunning fox. He was uncertain about whether or not he could kill him to shut him up. And even if he were confident, he couldn't easily act and weaken his own side prematurely. After all, he still had the Righteous Dao cultivators to contend with.

Zenith Yin's face twitched when the old man mentioned Man Huzi. He had previously experienced just how fearsome Man Huzi's Heavenbearing Devil Arts were. Even with his newly acquired minor mastery of his Heavenwide Corpsefire, he didn't hold any confidence in facing that man. If by chance that man were to use the pretext of taking in that youngster as a disciple, then he would insist on taking the lion's share of the treasure. He wouldn't have any way to prevent it. Unless...

Seeing that he was no longer able to preserve the secret of the Bloodjade Spiders, Zenith Yin started to think of how he wouldn't suffer a smaller portion of the treasures.

At that moment, his heart stirred and he looked at the old man with an odd expression, faintly guessing the meaning behind his previous words. The Confucian-robed old man faintly smiled in response to his odd expression and transmitted a message to his ear.

Zenith Yin's expression started to ceaselessly fluctuate.

The old man's voice transmission was short and he quickly

resumed speaking out loud, “How about this proposal?”

Without taking much time to think, Zenith Yin gloomily said, “Fine, I accept.”

The old man revealed a pleased expression and said, “Good, this is how it should be.” He then glanced at Han Li and unhurriedly said, “Now, between the two of us, who do you think is more suitable to become his master?”

After muttering to himself, Zenith Yin said, “Naturally, he will decide who will become his master. That would be a bit more fair.”

The old man blankly stared for a moment before revealing a strange expression. But after some conderation, he nodded his head in agreement.

When Zenith Yin saw this, he wore a seldom seen smile. He then turned towards Han Li and indifferently said, “You must’ve already heard our chat! Your Bloodjade Spider is something that we require in our treasurehunt, something that we cannot release under any circumstance. If you believe I won’t kill you because you are the master of the spirit beast, then you are gravely mistaken. This Grandmaster happens to know of a convenient method to refine spirit corpses. If worst comes to worst, I will kill the Bloodjade Spider and refine it into a demon corpse. Since the Bloodjade spider’s cultivation will greatly suffer from this, I won’t do this unless I am forced. If you are afraid of any disadvantages that will result from being involved, then you can become either of our disciples and receive our protection. Also, you will acquire a portion of the treasure should we be successful in acquiring it. As

you appear to be a smart fellow, you should know what to do!”

Zenith Yin calmly laid out both the carrot and the stick, causing Han Li’s expression to change.

In fact, Han Li was inwardly cursing without end. Ever since the Confucian-robed old man had arrived, Han Li felt ill at ease as if the situation had taken a turn for the worse. He had originally wished for the two eccentrics to fight amongst themselves, allowing him to slip away in the ensuing chaos. But he didn’t expect for the cunning old foxes to reach an agreement after only a few words.

Now, Han Li reckoned there wasn’t the slightest chance that the Bone Sage would appear to help him.

As for using the Bloodjade Spider as a threat, it seemed it wouldn’t have any effect. He reckoned that if he were to truly order the Bloodjade Spider to self detonate, Zenith Yin would rush to refine them. But as his life was hanging by only this thread, he couldn’t afford to damn himself by angering these Nascent Soul cultivators.

It seemed that if he didn’t agree, he would only be met with death.

Chapter 456: Becoming Zenith Yin's Disciple

Just as Han Li thought about saying something, he suddenly heard a voice transmission from Layman Qing Yi.

“Han Li, this old man hasn’t accepted a disciple in his entire life and doesn’t have much longer to live. If you were to become my disciple, then my legacy, magic treasures, and all else will be inherited by you. You aren’t going to come across such good fortune elsewhere.” Layman Qing Yi’s voice was full of allure.

Han Li understood that his words were certain to be overstated, but he couldn’t help but feel tempted. Before he could even think it over, he heard Zenith Yin’s gloomy voice.

“Youngster, regardless of what this eccentric had promised you, I want to remind you that this eccentric is a rogue cultivator, one who treads the solitary path. Apart from a desolate island, he has few other possessions. Even if you were to inherit everything from him, it won’t amount to much. However, my Zenith Yin Island is different. Not only are there many cultivators, but it also possesses grand influence. As my own personal disciple, you will hold an unimaginable amount of influence on the island. Regardless of whether it’s beautiful pair cultivation servants or precious pill and tool ingredients, this Grandmaster will allow you to select them. I also saw that you were walking quite close to the Exquisite Sound Sect’s Fairy Violet Spirit. If you have any interest in her, it can be handled! So long as you pledge to be my disciple, I will personally bring her to Zenith Yin Island to become your furnace cauldron. These incentives should be much to your satisfaction!” Zenith Yin was very direct, listing off many conditions in a torrent.

However, this wasn't the end. The Bone Sage's voice soon entered his ear, "Youngster Han, take my traitorous disciple as a master. That way, we can look for a favorable opportunity to kill him. Don't forget, I am the only person who knows the pill formula for the refinement of the Ninecurl Spirit Ginseng. You had best do as I suggest, otherwise..." The Bone Sage's words were filled with an obvious threat.

Han Li inwardly rolled his eyes. Each of them had ulterior motives, and he would suffer greatly if he wasn't careful.

In his own mind, if he truly wanted to take a master, then he would naturally pick the Confucian-robed old man. Although he wouldn't receive many great benefits, he wouldn't become entangled with a hideous mess of relations. It would be far more peaceful, and he wouldn't be involved with any more quarrels.

As for Zenith Yin's medicine pills, beautiful women, and techniques, Han Li wasn't particularly interested. The talk regarding Fairy Violet Spirit interested him even less.

But with the Bone Sage's voice transmission, Han Li had to carefully reconsider. Solidifying a Nascent Soul was his next objective on the path to Immortality. Although it was still quite some time away, the pill recipe was still something that he had to acquire.

With that thought, Han Li lowered his head and started muttering to himself, pondering over what was to be gained or

lost.

Han Li's expression changed several times over a short period of time before he raised his head. His next words were music to Zenith Yin's ears and to the disappointment of the Confucian-robed old man.

"This one has long heard of Zenith Yin Island's great reputation. Junior wishes to receive a few pointers from Senior Wu."

"Good choice, Han Li! This Grandmaster will first accept you as an in name disciple. When we later return to Zenith Yin Island, I will conduct a ceremony for you to become an official disciple. This Profound Yin Ring is a set of ancient treasures that I acquired when I was young, and I've given it to each of my personal disciples. Since it is both a keepsake and a protective treasure, be sure to properly take care of it!" Zenith Yin understood the value of striking when the iron was hot. He immediately took a dark grey ring off his hand and handed it over to Han Li.

Han Li accepted it with slight surprise and carefully looked at it.

The ring was just about as large as one would expect, but it was etched with a few mysterious talisman characters that released pale blue light. One could tell that it was unordinary at a glance.

As Han Li felt joy, he heard the Bone Sage scoff.

"Profound Yin Ring? It seems my traitorous disciple has cleanly

eliminated any traces of my existence. This was obviously an ancient treasure that I had bestowed upon him, the Yin Yang Ring. He actually changed its name. Humph! Don't grow too excited. Although this Yin Ring can protect your body and repel attacks, the Yang Ring that he possesses can be used to restrain you. If you attempt to use it when you deal with him, you will only be meeting your own doom."

When Han Li heard this, he didn't reveal any peculiarities as he respectfully paid thanks to Zenith Yin. However, he couldn't help but inwardly sigh. With such a deep and cunning schemer as Zenith Yin by his side, he must be exceedingly vigilant. Else, he would suffer a terrible fate.

He now hoped that the Bone Sage truly had a method to kill Zenith Yin. Otherwise, he'd have to later join Zenith Yin Island and obediently become Eccentric Zenith Yin's disciple.

Besides, even if Han Li did want to become a genuine, obedient disciple, Zenith Yin might not be sincere in receiving him. Whether or not Zenith Yin would become hostile after all was done, was yet another matter to be concerned with. Faithfully following after Zenith Yin was not an option!

As of now, he could only improvise as events unfolded, since he didn't have the strength to do otherwise!

Although Han Li was well aware that the cultivation world was where the weak were prey for the strong, he hadn't felt such helplessness since he was at Foundation Establishment.

He had previously found himself in perilous circumstances many times before, but he was able to use the entirety of his strength to overcome the odds. But if he were to now confront a Nascent Soul cultivator, he wouldn't stand the slightest chance.

This all caused him to wonder whether he was born under cursed stars! However, this was a passing thought. He merely thought to follow after the Bone Sage and investigate the secrets of the map fragment from curiosity. Just how did he land himself into the eyes of Nascent Soul cultivators?

Han Li slightly regretted his choice. Suppressing the deep grievances that couldn't be revealed, he forced himself to act excited and happy.

Upon seeing Han Li wear the Profound Yin Ring and respectfully thank him, Zenith Yin was quite satisfied. After discussing a few things with the old man, he had Han Li follow behind him.

The day was nearly over. If they didn't hurry over to the canyon, they would be eternally trapped here. As such, Han Li retrieved his Bloodjade Spider before flying across the horizon with the others.

Along the way, Zenith Yin happily chatted with Han Li and took the initiative to point out a few mistakes in Han Li's cultivation, much to the benefit of Han Li. Han Li couldn't help but sigh. There was quite a huge difference in the path of cultivation for those with a guide and those without.

When Wu Chou saw this, his face carried a trace of resentment. Although he attempted to hide it with all his might, Han Li was still able to sense his immense hostility. Still, Han Li pretended to be unaware of this and paid him no further attention.

The four of them flew quickly. About six hours later, they arrived in front of a mountain that was about ten thousand meters tall.

This extremely steep mountain was made of black and grey stones. The mountain was cleanly split at its center in a supernaturally fine manner. It was even split through the mountain's foundation, producing a huge natural canyon.

But what was even more strange was the twinkling blue and red light that separated the center of the mountain into two. It appeared truly otherworldly from a distance.

Currently, over thirty differently dressed cultivators sat at the entrance of the canyon in silent meditation. Their expressions were solemn as if they were waiting for something.

Zenith Yin and the other three slowly descended at the center of the group.

Han Li swept his gaze over them, and discovered that the black-robed Yuan Yao was also among them.

When Yuan Yao saw Han Li accompanying the Nascent Soul cultivators of the Devil Dao, she revealed amazement. When Han

Li turned his gaze towards her, she flusteredly turned her head away, not daring to meet his gaze.

Han Li was slightly surprised and faintly realized something. He then wordlessly turned his sights elsewhere.

He didn't see Fairy Violet Spirit or that youthful male cultivator. It seems they returned to the pavilion without any intention of undergoing the paths of ice and fire.

Although the meditating cultivators appeared solemn, they were calm and composed, each possessing an unordinary bearing. In terms of cultivation, a majority of them were superior to Han Li's. Although he didn't know how many of them possessed late Core Formation cultivation, he could tell that a majority of them held mid Core Formation cultivation. As for those that possessed early Core Formation cultivation like Han Li and Yuan Yao, there were only seven of them. However, all of them were collected and appeared full of confidence.

After Han Li finished his observations, he slightly frowned. There were no other Nascent Soul cultivators present apart from Zenith Yin and Layman Qing Yi. Seeing this, Zenith Yin found a good area and sat down. Wu Chou naturally followed and sat down besides him.

"Han Li, come rest beside your master!" Zenith Yin spoke, assuming the role of Han Li's gentle master.

Han Li didn't wish to approach the eccentric, but under Zenith

Yin's gaze, he could only force himself to comply and sit beside him.

Chapter 457: Heavenbearing Devil Arts

Just as Han Li sat down, he heard a sonic boom from the distant sky. Wan Tianming and the other two Nascent Soul Righteous Dao cultivators appeared and descended onto the ground..

When they spotted Zenith Yin and Layman Qing Yi, they sneered and gathered at another location. They were whispering to each other, discussing some secret matters.

When Zenith Yin saw this, he snorted and soon closed his eyes shortly after.

It was impossible for Han Li to be as calm as Zenith Yin. Instead, he turned his eyes elsewhere as if he were observing something. However, if someone were to attentively examine Han Li, one would find that his gaze was unfocused and that he was completely inattentive.

In the time it took to finish a meal, six more cultivators arrived in succession.

The two white-clothed Star Palace elders had also rushed over. Now, there was only one Nascent Soul cultivator that had yet to arrive, Man Huzi.

In the next hour, Man Huzi had yet to appear, causing Wan Tianming and the other Righteous Dao cultivators to look at Zenith Yin and Layman Qing Yi with strange expressions. Despite this, they both still appeared calm.

As Han Li was closer to the two, he was able to see a trace of apprehension in their eyes. Man Huzi's absence clearly worried the two Devil Dao eccentrics, as they would prove to be no match against the Righteous Dao without him.

As time slowly passed, Zenith Yin and Layman Qing Yi were no longer able to maintain their calm facades. Their expressions grew stern as they began to repeatedly gaze towards the sky.

Although the sky didn't show any indication of time passing and was eternally bright, Han Li supposed that the day was about to come to an end.

'Could it be that Man Huzi, the top figure of the Devil Dao, met with some mishap in the Heavenvoid Hall?' Han Li wondered.

Under the circumstances, would this prove to be favorable or disadvantageous for him?

With the Devil Dao cultivators growing uneasy, the Righteous Dao cultivators grew increasingly malicious. Soon, piercing whistles reached them from the distant sky. These whistles were extremely loud and became more frequent and shrill as time passed by, causing all the nearby cultivators to appear at a loss.

But when Zenith Yin and the Confucian-robed old man heard this, their expressions relaxed and they looked at each other with a smile.

The Confucian-robed old man smiled and softly said, “It seems that Man Huzi’s mood is quite good. He should’ve acquired an unexpected harvest.”

“Humph! What would be unexpected? At most, he would’ve plucked Genesis Fruit without any complications!” Zenith Yin shook his head and spoke without concern.

Layman Qing Yi smiled, but when he thought to say something, a sphere of yellow light flashed in the distant sky and streaked towards them like a shooting star. In an instant, everyone was gazing at the sky.

Han Li’s eyes formed a strange expression, containing hidden apprehension as he gazed at the sphere of light.

Han Li couldn’t help himself. The other cultivators that saw the might of the Heavenbearing Devil Arts for the first time also revealed expressions of shock.

Under the cover of the yellow light sphere, Man Huzi appeared extremely strange, resembling a terrifying demonic god. Not only was his body emitting a blinding golden light, but his skin was densely covered in coin-sized golden scales. The scales appeared as luminous as pure gold and shined with a grand, chilling light, leaving an impression of being eternally indestructible.

To Zenith Yin’s side, Wu Chou gasped and spoke in a daze, “That’s the Heavenbearing Devil Arts? It seems truly fearsome!” It

seemed he was quite in awe of Man Huzi's appearance.

Zenith Yin coldly glanced at Wu Chou and said with slight annoyance, "Humph! It's merely a tortoise's shell! When I have refined the Profound Yin Arts to perfection realm, it will be no weaker than the Heavenbearing Devil Art."

This suddenly caused Wu Chou to recall that his own ancestor was on bad terms with Man Huzi. Wasn't his praise of Man Huzi deliberately provoking Zenith Yin? He then repeatedly praised his master with an embarrassed appearance before keeping silent.

In the sky, Man Huzi swept his gaze past them and immediately caught sight of Zenith Yin and the others. He dropped down towards them, causing the nearby ground to tremble upon landing.

After landing, Man Huzi's scales retracted from his body, and his golden light gradually faded away.

"It seems Brother Man had a very successful harvest! Why else would you be so happy?" The Confucian-robed old man cupped his hand towards him with a beaming smile.

Man Huzi excitement disappeared upon hearing the old man's question. He answered without hesitation, "Hehe! I've made a few gains. I killed an Ice Striped Toad near the Genesis Fruit Tree. Its inner core will prove to be very beneficial towards my Heavenbearing Devil Arts." Zenith Yin and Layman Qing Yi found this contrary to expectation. They looked at each other in dismay,

not knowing whether he was speaking the truth.

After a moment's pause, Layman Qing Yi's previous smile was restored, and he said, "Then I must congratulate Fellow Daoist Man. If your Heavenbearing Devil Arts progresses, you will have the same strength as the Archsaint of the Six Paths and the Heavenly Star Sages."

Afterwards, Zenith Yin also congratulated him with a calm expression.

Man Huzi chuckled and was about to say something, but he appeared slightly baffled when his eyes fell on Han Li. He remained slightly baffled before his eyes strangely glinted and released a trace of astonishing pressure.

Bearing the brunt of this pressure, Han Li instantly felt his body tense, incapable of moving as if each of his limbs were being weighed down by a thousand kilograms. But what was most shocking to Han Li was the feeling of Man Huzi's icy gaze seeing past both his mind and body.

Han Li's complexion became deathly pale, and he reacted by circulating the Great Development Technique. After a moment, his mind stabilized, returning a bit of blood to his face and restoring control of his body back to normal.

"Yi!" Man Huzi couldn't help but be astonished. He soon revealed a trace of pleasant surprise, but when he thought to do something else, Zenith Yin blurred and appeared in front of Han Li.

Zenith Yin offsetted Man Huzi's imposing pressure and calmly asked, "Brother Man, what are you doing? Why are you bullying my junior disciple?"

"Junior disciple?" Man Huzi blankly stared for a moment before appearing gloomy.

After disdainfully glancing at Wu Chou, he bluntly said, "Zenith Yin, are you making fun of me? Apart from that Youngster Wu Chou, what other disciples did you bring to the Heavenvoid Hall?" He appeared as if he planned to attack if he were to be corrected.

"Hehe, Man Huzi, you misunderstand. Young Friend Han Li has been taken in as a disciple by Fellow Daoist Wu just today. It's no wonder why Fellow Daoist Man didn't know of it." Layman Qing Yi hastily gave an explanation from the side. Currently, Han Li was very important to them. It was natural for him to prevent any mishaps from occurring.

"Zenith Yin, did I hear correctly? You took in a disciple while here?" Man Huzi expressed shocked and sized up Han Li twice through.

"Although he is only an in-name disciple as I've yet to conduct a formal apprenticeship ceremony, Young Friend Han Li is now a member of Zenith Yin Island. I hope Brother Man won't treat me too harshly!" Zenith Yin spoke with a slight smile.

Man Huzi blinked a few times, staring at Zenith Yin and Layman

Qing Yi for a moment before turning his gaze towards Han Li. He then laughed and said, “Good, very good! This disciple of yours is quite good. Needless to say, his spiritual sense is several times greater than that grandson of yours. If you carefully foster him, he will have great prospects in the future! Hehe, great prospects indeed!” That last sentence of his seemed to possess a deeper meaning.

Zenith Yin and Layman Qing Yi were at a complete loss and looked at each other in confusion.

Zenith Yin frowned and slowly asked, “What does Brother Man mean?”

“There is no meaning. Your in-name disciple is quite good. Are you interested in giving him to me? I feel like this youngster is quite suitable for cultivating my Heavenbearing Devil Arts.” Man Huzi spoke without care, but those words greatly frightened his fellow Devil Dao cultivators.

Layman Qing Yi hastily changed the subject. “Brother Man must be joking! Young Friend Han has already become a disciple of Zenith Yin. How can he be so casually changed.”

Man Huzi grimly laughed and stroked his beard. He suddenly spoke with a cold tone, “Hehe! If you aren’t willing, then let’s forget about it. To tell the truth, accepting a disciple is far too troublesome for me! However, why did Fellow Daoist Qing grow so anxious for a disciple of Zenith Yin Island? Could it be that this youngster has something that can’t be revealed?”

After this was said, the old man's expression momentarily changed before calmly glancing at Zenith Yin.

Chapter 458: Path of Ice and Fire

Zenith Yin's expression slightly changed. After a moment of silence, he calmly said, "Brother Man, since you have doubts, I won't conceal anything. My junior disciple will prove quite useful during our treasure hunt in the Inner Halls. I hope you will forgive him if he has offended you."

Zenith Yin's words caused Han Li to be extremely annoyed. When could he have possibly offended Man Huzi? Was it not Man Huzi who had forcefully seized the jade pillar from him and left him with a bellyful of anger?!

Naturally, Han Li didn't dare to say this and the words remained in his mind.

With a wave of his arm, Man Huzi lazily said, "Offend? I don't even recognize this youngster. There was no offense! I merely saw that his cultivation technique was quite interesting and I wanted to test it. But, how can a Core Formation cultivator be useful in the Inner Halls? Are you duping me?"

Zenith Yin frowned and hesitated for a moment. Afterwards, he gave Layman Qing Yi an indicative glance. Layman Qing Yi faintly smiled and sent Man Huzi a sound transmission.

Seeing the two's secretive manners, Man Huzi revealed slight disdain. But after he heard the transmission, his expression suddenly changed, and he looked at Han Li in shock.

Man Huzi then asked the old man a few questions with sound transmissions and came to a sudden realization, revealing an icy expression.

Man Huzi narrowed his eyes and stared at Zenith Yin with a sharp gaze. He said in an imposing manner, “Zenith Yin, I was wondering why you would inexplicably take in a disciple. So it turned out you... humph! You sure came up with a good plan!”

“There is no need to be so angry, Brother Man. If you came across a similar matter, perhaps you would’ve used a similar method. In addition, we’ve revealed the matter to you and have no intention of monopolizing the harvest. We’ll be relying on Brother Man in the coming treasure hunt.” Zenith Yin calmly said.

After a moment of thought, Man Huzi’s expression grew calm, and he said, “If I don’t take action, Wan Tianming and his group of hypocrites wouldn’t give you a chance to take the treasure. So let’s get the business out the way first. If you get the treasure, how are we splitting it?”

“How about we split the treasure into four? Including Young Friend Han, each person will get a share.” Layman Qing Yi had long considered this question and immediately answered.

This answer caused Man Huzi to become angry. With a derisive expression, he said, “Qing Yi, do you really think I’m so easily swindled? Do you really think that you’ll be able to handle Wan Tianming when the time comes? And you actually want to split it evenly amongst us?”

The old man sighed and responded with a chuckle, “Don’t be angry, Brother Man. It’s true that my thoughts aren’t entirely fair. How does Brother Man feel it should be decided?”

Man Huzi spoke with a serious expression, “I don’t care how much you all receive, I require half of the treasure. After all, Wan Tianming alone is more than enough to deal with the both of you. If I’m going to take him on, then it is only fair that I get half.”

Man Huzi’s words weren’t surprising to Zenith Yin and the old man. They had clearly expected him to make large demands.

Zenith Yin unhurriedly said, “An entire half? Brother Man’s appetite is truly great. But don’t forget that without my junior disciple’s assistance, our odds of acquiring the treasure are pathetically low. My disciple also requires a share.”

“Humph! A Core Formation cultivator also gets a share among us?” Man Huzi disdainfully glanced at Han Li.

Han Li’s expression stirred for a moment before calming down.

“Hehe! If he were only a rogue cultivator, he obviously wouldn’t be entitled to a share of the Heavenvoid Cauldron’s treasures. But since he is my disciple, he will get one.” Zenith Yin was unwilling to back down.

A stern expression appeared on Man Huzi’s face. Just as he

thought to say something, the old man rushed to propose a compromise, “There is no need to fight. How about this? When we acquire the treasure, we’ll split the treasure into five. Two shares will go to Brother Man and the other three will go to the rest of us. Surely, that is fair?”

Man Huzi blankly stared for a moment, before stroking his beard in silence.

Zenith Yin immediately declared his position with a heavy voice, “I find these conditions acceptable. What do you think, Brother Man?”

“Fine! Although I am not still not satisfied, it is better than the previous proposal.” Man Huzi wrinkled his brow and spoke with an annoyed tone.

He had already figured out that Zenith Yin and the old man had joined hands, and that the proposed conditions were likely their bottom line. As such, he was unable to pressure them too strongly.

As the Devil Dao eccentrics were discussing how to split their not yet acquired treasures, Wan Tianming and the Righteous Dao cultivators were also having a secret discussion about the treasures.

“Sect Master Wan, how certain are you that your Gold Threaded Silkworm will be able take out the Heavenvoid Cauldron? There have been many experts in the past that thought to acquire this treasure, but not one of them were successful. I fear we will also be

unsuccessful.” Daoist Priest Tian Wuzi spoke with worry.

Wan Tianming calmly said, “Be at ease. While my Gold Threaded Silkwork doesn’t have high odds, we did acquire the Sky Azure Flower. So long as I feed it to the silkworm when we acquire the treasure and overexert it, we will have at least a four percent chance of success. That can already be considered high.”

“This humble Daoist also knows of this. I merely felt ill at ease when thinking of this matter. I am ashamed. It seems my own cultivation is lacking and my mind must be further polished.” Tian Wuzi spoke with slight embarrassment.

Wan Tianming chuckled, “Hehe, I am also deeply worried that those two old freaks, the Heavenly Star Sages, would acquire the treasures of the Heavenvoid. It only human nature as we are mere cultivators. We aren’t desireless like true Immortals.”

The old farmer then said, “However, Sect Master Wan had better keep watch on those Devil Dao cultivators. They are secretly talking about something. They seem to have just had some internal strife, but now they are bantering as if nothing happened. Are those Devil Dao cultivators scheming something?”

Having heard this, Wan Tianming looked at the Devil Dao cultivators in the distance who had finished their negotiations and scoffed.

Then with a solemn expression, he said, “While the techniques and might of the Devil Dao are powerful, their temperaments are

easily distorted. A few strange displays isn't out of the ordinary. There is nothing to make a fuss about! Even if we fail in our attempt, we must also make sure that the Heavenvoid Cauldron doesn't fall into the hands of the Devil Dao. After all, Zenith Yin's mutant fire serpent is also a spirit beast capable of acquiring the treasure."

"Sect Master Wan speaks truly! If the Devil Dao acquires it, they will flourish. Given the current weakness of the Star Palace, we cannot allow the Devil Dao to replace the Star Palace as hegemon of the Scattered Star Seas." Tian Wuzi repeatedly nodded his head.

Wan Tianming was very pleased and thought to say something more when the blue-red light from the huge mountain suddenly flourished. The walls near the entrance to the canyon started to tremendously shake, splitting open two separate passageways. It seemed that they lead into the canyon.

A meter tall stone slab emerged at each of the entrances with the words "Path of Profound Crystal" and "Path of Molten Rock" in ancient characters.

Suddenly, the cultivators closest to the entrances hurriedly took a step forward.

Those that approached the entrance to the Path of Molten Rock grew light headed and felt their mouths dry from the gust of scorching heat that flew past them.

As for those near the entrance to the Path of Profound Crystal, it

continuously emitted a white, ice-cold aura. The faint whistling of harsh winds caused one's heart to grow cold.

Upon seeing the paths appear, Zenith Yin stood with roused spirits. He spoke to Han Li with a caring voice, "Han Li, lets go. We will gather up again on the other side of the paths of ice and fire. Although I am incapable of personally bringing you through them, I will give you a treasure to resist either the cold or heat depending on what path you choose."

When Han Li was traversing the ghost mist, he had been informed about the paths of ice and fire by Fairy Violet Spirit.

He knew that after setting foot in the passage, he would be teleported to a predetermined area in the canyon. There was very little chance that he would be teleported together with others as had been reaffirmed by Zenith Yin.

After some thought, Han Li slowly said, "I will walk the path of molten rock. I happen to possess some fire resistant clothes that might prove to be useful.

Zenith Yin took out a deep blue jade pendant from his storage pouch without hesitation and handed it over to Han Li. "Alright, take good care of this. With this item, you should have no problems passing through the trial, given your cultivation."

When Man Huzi saw this, he insincerely smiled and said, "This is truly unexpected. Such a miserly person as Zenith Yin actually showed a moment of generosity. Isn't that your White Rhino

Emblem?”

Chapter 459: Trek

Zenith Yin didn't grow angry, instead replying with a roll of his eyes and a chuckle, "My junior disciple's cultivation is too shallow. As his master, it is only natural that I look after him. Although the White Rhino Emblem could be considered precious, I plan on taking the path of profound ice so this item will be useless to me. If I am not mistaken, Brother Man also has a Glacial Ice Pearl. Why not lend it to my disciple? Surely Fellow Daoist doesn't wish for my junior disciple to encounter any mishaps before he enters the Inner Halls!"

"Humph! I cannot allow that youngster to easily die before the Heavenvoid Cauldron is secured. I acquired this Glacial Ice Pearl from a Glacial Carp during my early years. How lucky for you, youngster." With that said, Man Huzi took out a thumb-sized misty white pearl and tossed it at Han Li.

Han Li felt joyful and gave many words of thanks after receiving the item. Although he knew these treasures were only given to him because of his Bloodjade Spider, they would allow him to go through the path of molten rock safely. It was exactly what he had wanted.

Although the Glacial Ice Pearl shone with white light similar to the White Rhino Emblem, it was far colder to the touch, causing his hand to tremble from its penetrating chill. He hastily placed it in his storage pouch, as it appeared to be the more valuable of the two.

When Layman Qing Yi saw this, he chuckled and entered the

path of profound ice with a blur. When the other cultivators saw this, they started to successively enter the canyons that they had previously chosen.

After only a short moment, a majority of the cultivators had already entered the canyons.

Zenith Yin glanced at Han Li and amiably said, “Han Li, how about you set off? We’ll meet again at the end in a few days.”

Han Li saw no reason to disagree and headed towards the path of molten rock. As he was walking forward, he swept his gaze around with a calm expression, resulting in a feeling of anxiousness.

‘That old devil, Bone Sage, still hasn’t appeared. Could it be that he had changed his mind and slipped away by himself?’ Han Li couldn’t help but assume the worst.

After all, human hearts were unpredictable. He could’ve changed his might after seeing the great might of Zenith Yin. If the Bone Sage truly abandoned him, Han Li would bluntly use the Bone Sage’s information as a bargaining chip with Zenith Yin to guarantee his life. An ominous glint shone from Han Li’s eyes as he thought this.

His actions had caught the attention of others. As Han Li felt slightly regretful from this, the Bone Sage’s voice had suddenly entered his ear, “Don’t glance around. I am concealed nearby and have yet to reveal myself. Do your best! I will meet you again after the path of ice and fire is cleared.”

Han Li felt some relief after recovering from his surprise and walked towards the passage with large steps.

Hot winds blew past Han Li just as he stepped into the passage, causing him to feel a scorching heat on his body. Han Li frowned and attentively looked forward.

The passage was six meters wide and couldn't be considered very tall. However, the way forward was glowing with blinding red light, placing apprehension in the hearts of those that see it.

Han Li licked his dried lips and glared at it for a moment before moving forward. Each step he took felt as if the temperature was rising. After thirty steps, Han Li was no longer capable of moving forward. The hot winds that occasionally blew past him and the already hot temperatures of his surroundings caused his body to feel pain.

After a moment of hesitation, Han Li covered his body in the water attribute barrier. The deep blue brilliance immediately alleviated the scorching heat.

He then patted his storage pouch and a streak of blue light flew out into his hand, the Fire Repulsing Robes.

Han Li immediately donned robes without much thought and suddenly felt a chill from his body. With roused spirits, Han Li continued forward.

After a dozen steps, he saw a sudden flash of light. A wall of red light was blocking his path.

After glancing at the wall of light, he walked in head first. He could hear footsteps echoing from behind him. He had no interest in meeting with other cultivators.

After a series of dizzying fluctuations from within the blinding red light, the disappeared heat reappeared in a vicious, overbearing counterattack. His blue light barrier was unable to endure and started flickering as if it were about to collapse.

Having yet to recover from his dizziness, Han Li grew greatly frightened and hastily circulated spiritual power throughout his body. After stabilizing his barrier, he examined his surroundings.

He saw scarlet red stone, yellow soil, plants that emitted red light, and a blurry, deep red sky. Everything was tainted with the color of fire.

Even while protected by his barrier and the Fire Repulsing Robes, he could clearly feel the scorching air.

Han Li took a deep breath with a sullen expression. Under these temperatures, he would only be able to endure for five hours. He had thought he wouldn't have to make use of any treasures and could easily make it through. But according to what Fairy Violet Spirit had said, in the second trial – the path of fire and ice – cultivators couldn't fly and could only slowly tread forward on

foot.

As such, those that were teleported farther away would have to spent several days of restless walking before arriving at the end of the canyon. This wasn't something that could be done while relying solely on one's cultivation. It would require the use of treasures that blocked the respective elements of each path.

In addition, the path wasn't the sole danger that the cultivators encountered on the path. The canyon gathered demon spirits of their respective elements which were the greatest hindrance in the trial. During each occurrence of this trial, about half of the resulting deaths were caused by these demon spirits.

In addition to this, there may be cultivators lying in ambush along the path, aiming to rob the treasures of others. This was something that had always occurred. After all, the closer one grew to the end of the canyon, the more likely one would encounter other cultivators. Their odds of survival would greatly increase after robbing the others of their elemental resistance treasures. Odds were that a few cultivators that found it too difficult to continue would attack without any hesitation.

Han Li stood in his original place without movement, examining his surroundings with narrow eyes and pondering over the information he had.

After the time it took to finish a cup of tea, Han Li's expression stirred. He then took out the White Rhino Emblem and hung it at his waist. He then replaced his blue light barrier with the jade emblem's white light.

He couldn't afford to squander any of his magic power. Staying still to recover his magic power was a suicidal action.

He then turn his head to the sky. After identifying the direction of the blurry red sun with great difficulty, he set off without any further delay.

Apart from a pile of rocks and a strange, perfectly straight tree, he didn't see anything else on the path as he slowly staggered onward.

After a short moment of walking through the searing air, Han Li encountered a large patch of vegetation blocking his path that glowed with a strange, fiery light.

Han Li frowned after looking at the strange plants and immediately shot a ball of glowing blue water towards it. Upon impact, the ball of water sizzled and turned to steam.

Han Li's expression slightly changed. He looked to the side of the plants but saw no other way past the strange vegetation.

After some hesitation, Han Li gritted his teeth and tried stepping through it.

Upon walking through, Han Li came to know the fearsomeness of the path of molten rock. Wild plants? These were closer to swords of flame. Their incredible sharpness and heat caused him no small

amount of pain.

Although he didn't suffer much damage due to the protection of the White Rhino Emblem and Fire Repulsing Robes, he still felt continuous stabs of pain from below his thigh as he painstakingly forced himself through.

After walking through only ten meters, Han Li was forced to redeploy his water attribute light barrier. Although this would quickly consume his magic power, it allowed Han Li to quickly escape from the blistering underbrush. Making full use of his Shifting Smoke Steps, he turned into a blue ghost that occasionally appeared within the dazzling red light. With each appearance, it had grown farther away.

.....

Elsewhere on the path of molten rock walked a middle-aged man.

He was Bu Wu, a late Core Formation cultivator with earth and fire spiritual roots. He managed to acquire his current cultivation in less three hundred years, resulting in a resounding fame in the local sea territories. Those that were close to him even thought that he was among those that had the highest chance to ascend to the Nascent Soul stage in the next hundred years.

Bu Wu greatly enjoyed the admirations and praise of others along with their envious gazes.

However, Bu Wu clearly understood his own circumstances.

Were it not for the the ancient “Essence Split Pill” that he had found in the stomach of a grade four demon beast he had slain while traveling, he would likely still be lingering at the Foundation Establishment Stage.

That medicine pill had caused him to feel the sweetness of ancient spirit medicines, saving him a hundred years of bitter cultivation. As such, he had made plans for this journey to Heavenvoid Hall and had purchased a fire dragon worm at great price. He planned to brave the Inner Halls during a moment of distraction and use the worm to acquire the top grade mysterious treasure renowned throughout the Scattered Star Seas, the Heavenvoid Cauldron. With the many treasures contained in the Heavenvoid Cauldron and the rumored Heavenmend Pill, breaking through to Nascent Soul Stage would only be a step away.

Chapter 460: The Path of Life and Death

When Bu Xu entered the Heavenvoid Hall and saw so many Nascent Soul eccentrics appear, he felt as if he had been drenched in cold water.

Any Nascent Soul cultivator that arrived here would naturally go hunt for treasures in the Inner Halls. The Heavenvoid Cauldron was certain to be the most important among them. Although Nascent Soul cultivators had also attended previous openings of the Heavenvoid Hall, there would only be about four of them. But now, there were actually eight Nascent Soul cultivators, causing his hopes to grow very faint.

But since he had already arrived, he was unwilling to cowardly return. As such, he entered the path of molten rock, holding a slight sliver of hope that it would prove to be as smooth as it had been with the ghost mist.

To tell the truth, he did hold some fear towards the ghost mist and a later trial, the Fantastical Boundary of Illusion. However, he didn't hold much regard for the path of ice and fire and never doubted whether or not he could pass it. This was because he cultivated a cultivation art well known amongst the Scattered Star Seas, the Tranquil Yang Art.

This cultivation art had forcefully inserted itself among the top ten mental cultivation arts among fire cultivation techniques. He had lost count of how many enemies he had exterminated, turning them entirely to ash with his Tranquil Yang True Fire. As such, he held complete confidence towards treading the path of molten rock

and resisting the heat with complete ease.

Naturally, given his many years of cultivation, he wouldn't arrogantly think of treading the path of molten rock without any hesitation. He had also prepared two fire protection magic tools, but it wasn't that he didn't want to prepare more. It was just that purchasing the Fire Dragon Worm had left him nearly destitute.

With the assistance of two magic tools and his Tranquil Yang Art, he felt that he would be able to traverse the path of molten rock without problem. But now, Bu Xu felt a deep regret churning in his guts.

After a short time on the path, he unexpectedly discovered that despite the wondrous fire resistant effects of his Tranquil Yang Arts, he was forced to continuously use his Tranquil Yang Arts at full strength in order to resist the scorching heat that surrounded him. His original thought of ignoring this hostile environment was impossible as his magic power was being depleted far faster than he had anticipated.

Outside the Heavenvoid Hall, he ordinarily only had to make use of the Tranquil Yang Arts in order to resist scorching flames.

It was clear that the heat emitted by the path of molten rock was completely different from common flames on the outside. There were certain to be restrictions put in place that suppressed fire attribute cultivation arts.

As for his two fire resistant magic tools, they had a very limited

effect in this strange environment, much to the dismay of Bu Xu.

In his six hours of walking the path, his magic power had been drained at a visible rate despite having continuously replenished his spiritual Qi with spirit stones. He'd only be able to persist for a day more before his magic power was exhausted, allowing the heat to turn his body to ash.

Bu Xu naturally didn't wish to fall here. He nervously rushed forward while sweeping his gaze in every direction. However, his surroundings were quiet and was completely absent of any others. This caused his thoughts of plundering the fire resistant magic treasures of others to prematurely perish.

The further he rushed forward, the more intensely Bu Xu felt despair. After a quarter hour later, Bu Xu eventually stopped with apprehension contained in his eyes.

Although he had both skilled techniques and magic power, he didn't have any hope of arriving at the canyon's end at this pace. In addition, if he were to encounter any other cultivators in his rush forward, his magic power would be in a sorry state. Forget about him attacking others, he would likely be preyed upon himself once they saw how weak he was.

Bu Xu anxiously paced back and forth. As time passed, thoughts began to bubble from his mind, looking for a method of survival.

Suddenly, he raised his head towards the deep red sky with fluctuating expressions.

After a determined expression momentarily appeared on his face, his body flashed with yellow light and started to float. His eyes were unblinking and his face appeared cautious.

After he rose up to ten meters in the air, he was extremely joyful to discover that nothing had happened. At this altitude, he could make use of his techniques to fly and reach the canyon's end after only a short time.

Wildly delighted at having found a way out of danger, Bu Xu formed an incantation gesture and turned into a ball of yellow light, disappearing with a blur.

BANG! Just as Bu Xu flew about hundred meters, a silver bolt of lightning struck from the deep red sky. With a miserable scream, his body scattered into ash while two items then silently fell into the shrubbery below.

...

Somewhere on the path of molten rock, a gorgeous, thirty-year-old woman wearing brilliant blue muslin looked hesitantly at the river of molten rock. Apart from a foot wide stone pillar, there was no other way for the woman to cross the scarlet red river that spanned over a hundred fifty meters.

The gorgeous woman frowned as she felt the overpowering heat radiating from the river of lava. After a moment of hesitation, she carefully set foot on the red stone pillar.

When the gorgeous woman stepped foot on the pillar, she immediately wore a pained expression. It was clear that the stone pillar was extremely hot. Even with the protection of the blue muslin, she still felt quite a bit of pain.

However, this woman was someone who possessed unwavering determination. After gritting her teeth, she slowly walked forward on the stone pillar cautiously.

At the start, it went quite smoothly. She ended up walking through about halfway unscathed. But as she approached the pillar's center, she suddenly heard rumblings in the distance.

The gorgeous woman was stunned and she couldn't help but turn her head in the direction of the river upstream. Her face then became deathly pale and panic stricken.

A violent maelstrom rushed down the river and transformed into a huge grey dragon. With bared fangs and claws, it arrived in front of the stone pillar in an instant and wrapped around the female cultivator who had just taken flight.

Then with a shriek of despair, the female cultivator disappeared without a trace.

A short moment later, a sparkling blue item sunk to the bottom of the lava.

...

Near an icy mountain on the path of profound crystal, a middle-aged man was back to back with an old man as they faced over ten crystal beasts. Red and white radiance flashed in every direction, but the battle soon came to an end. The crystal beasts stayed for a moment more before dispersing in different directions, leaving behind two badly damaged corpses.

...

At another location on the path of profound crystal, Zenith Yin was leisurely taking a walk along the path of ice. His body was sparkling with black light and didn't possess the slightest trace of cold. While the crystal beasts would occasionally unburrow from the snow and attempt to ambush Zenith Yin, they would be easily split in two with a flash of black light.

Afterwards, he would continue on his way as if nothing had happened.

...

On a hill, Han Li blankly stared ahead of him with a trace of hesitation.

After rushing through the fiery overgrowth by making full use of the Shifting Smoke Steps, he had returned to his original speed. After all, the Shifting Smoke Steps put too much strain on his

body. Even with the resilient body of a Core Formation cultivator, he couldn't persist in using it for long. Naturally, he could make use of it far longer than when he was at Foundation Establishment.

After this, he encountered an extremely dangerous swamp of lava. In fact, it appeared more like a pit of lava. Even a person of resilient mind such as Han Li felt cold sweat line his back.

Were it not for the protection provided by the Glacial Ice Bead that Man Huzi had given him, he would've suffered blistering skin and roasted flesh, had he managed to survive it.

As for the series of strange trees and three flame spirits he later encountered, they forced Han Li to expend a bit of effort before he could safely continue on his way.

But now Han Li was left stunned by something he had never seen before, an endless black desert with black sand and dunes.

This strange scene caused Han Li to feel uneasy and unwilling to walk into it.

However, taking an alternative route was impossible. The expanse of black desert was far too large. If he wanted to make a detour, it would take at least two days. According to the accounts of cultivators that came before him, this trial must be cleared within five days; else, the transportation formation would be sealed, leaving the rest to die.

As for Han Li, he reckoned that he had only managed to reach the center of the canyon. He didn't have the time to waste even if he didn't want to brave this danger. Who knew what monsters laid in wait beneath the black sands?

Han Li tightly creased his brow and gazed at the scene before him, pondering about what strange dangers laid hidden within. At that moment, Han Li's heart stirred, and he disappeared with a blur.

Footsteps soon came from behind where he originally was.

Chapter 461: Black Desert

Shortly after Han Li disappeared, a male cultivator slowly walked out from the side of the small mountain. He appeared to be about forty years old and possessed a sallow complexion. He was the cultivator who had treated Zenith Yin so fearfully at the entrance of Heavenvoid Hall.

At that moment, he was wearing an odd, dark green conical bamboo hat and had a white jade bowl in his grasp. His body concealed a chill that was completely isolated from the blazing heat surrounding him.

He climbed to the mountaintop and surveyed his surroundings with great vigilance as if he were looking for something. But after seeing that there was nothing, his expression only grew increasingly cautious.

He thought he had spotted a silhouette blur when he gazed at the mountain from afar. But after finding no traces of the person on the mountain, he became even more vigilant.

After coldly sweeping his gaze past his surroundings once more, he wordlessly inserted two of his fingers into the jade bowl and brushed it upward. A streak of white light then flew out from it and started revolving around his head.

“Execute!” The sallow-faced man softly shouted, forming an incantation gesture with one hand.

Peng. The white light trembled for a moment before suddenly bursting into specks as wondrous as starlight scattered from a goddess. The light then completely enveloped a forty meter radius.

The red land was enveloped in layers of frost upon touching the white light, but nothing abnormal had appeared within it.

A trace of doubt appeared on the man's face. After a moment of thought, he didn't seem to care anymore, believing that he had been mistaken. After putting the matter to the back of his head, he then looked at the black desert with a grave face.

"This place is truly strange." The man muttered to himself as he looked at the black desert with a strange gaze. He seemed somewhat hesitant to depart.

But after a short moment of consideration, he flung his sleeve and shot a streak of red light towards the ground. The light faded away to reveal a small red fox.

The man flicked his finger, sending a green medicine pill into the small beast's mouth. The small beast swallowed the pill and expressed great pleasure.

"Go!" The sallow-faced cultivator bluntly commanded the small beast, pointing towards the direction of the black desert.

The small beast immediately rushed down the hill at an extraordinary speed, turning into a red streak of light along the

way.

After a short moment, the small fox-like beast had arrived a hundred meters deep into the black desert. It was still unscathed even after running around in a large circle.

Nothing strange had occurred. It seemed that apart from the color of the black desert, there was nothing out of the ordinary.

The sallow-faced man revealed an expression of surprise. This was clearly not what he had expected. He had prepared himself for the loss of his Red Fox Beast. As it was but a common grade one spirit beast, he would feel no heartache at all. It didn't have any notable abilities apart from its nimble movements and exceptional sense of smell.

He tensely frowned and rigidly stared at the small beast as it ran around the desert in circles before whistling towards it. It then ran over and flew back into his sleeve.

Afterwards, the man gazed at the black desert in silence with a wavering expression.

But with only a short moment of hesitation, he started to descend the hill and carefully walked towards the black desert.

Unknown to him, shortly after he walked down the small hill, Han Li's silhouette reappeared at the hilltop in a series of fluctuating blurs.

Although the sallow-faced man used a technique to search a wide area, Han Li was easily able to evade his attack and revealed no trace of himself by using both the nameless Qi restraining technique and the Shifting Smoke Steps. Although the man was a mid Core Formation cultivator, Han Li was very confident that a sudden strike of his nine Bamboo Cloudswarm Swords would instantly slay him, had he drawn closer.

Han Li had been quite hesitant about whether or not he should kill him. While his two treasures were quite valuable, Han Li chose to have him act as a forward scout.

But when the sallow-faced man had the small beast explore the black desert to no results, Han Li completely renounced his plan of attacking him. As the greatest dangers were unknown, it'd be better to let him guide the way. Han Li didn't believe that the black desert was completely devoid of danger.

With the White Rhino Emblem and Glacial Ice Pearl leaving him unfettered by the heat, he didn't feel an urgent need to seize those fire resistance treasures.

The sallow-faced man didn't perceive Han Li was behind him in the slightest and continued onward into the strange black desert.

Three meters, six meters...

The man's expression grew increasingly tense as he tread deeper into the black desert. He had already activated his bamboo hat and

enveloped his body in a layer of dense green light.

After the man walked through the desert for about a kilometer without problem, his expression slightly relaxed and he felt great relief. It is commonly said that once one headed this deeply into an area, any dangers it possessed should've already appeared.

Han Li gazed at the man's silhouette from a distance away with a strange expression. Could it be that he had guessed incorrectly? The black desert was merely frightening and didn't actually possess any dangers at all? Had he known this was the case, he definitely would've ambushed and robbed the man of his two treasures.

Han Li felt regret! But soon, a startling and abrupt change occurred in the distance.

The black sand around the the sallow-faced cultivator suddenly floated up and surrounded him without a sound. The sand then released a dim black light that appeared rather strange.

As the man was rich with experience, he instantly reacted by raising his jade bowl towards the sky. A vast white light scattered from the bowl, adding another layer of defense upon his green barrier.

At that moment, the black sand turned into countless winged black insects and charged at the shocked man from every direction.

The man bellowed. With a flourish of white light, he was then surrounded with palm sized shields of ice. They then hurriedly rotated to form a white hurricane around him.

He had now clearly made out the true appearance of the insects, winged ants. Their numbers were astonishing with no less than ten thousand insects surrounding him.

The sallow-faced cultivator's mind quickly churned, trying his utmost to recall the specific breed and weakness of these winged ants. But before he could finish thinking, the black swarm of ants knocked against his ice shield hurricane.

Clangs rang out in quick succession as the shields repelled the winged ants several meters back. When the man saw this, he couldn't help but feel slight relief.

But a short moment later, his heart froze. After knocking the black winged ants tumbling away several times, they charged forwards once more without the slightest injury.

He was greatly alarmed! Without taking further thought, he raised his hand and released a grey flying knife. It transformed into a ten meter long streak of light and fiercely chopped towards the winged ant swarm.

Just as the flying knife left the hurricane, the countless ants let out a drone and surrounded it. The fierce attack of the grey light didn't harm the flying insects in the slightest. Instead, they swarmed all over the flying knife in an instant and held it still.

The sallow-faced man turned pale from fright and tried to recall his magic treasure. However, he was too slow. The magic treasure's grey light flashed several times before being submerged in the swarm of black insects.

A blood curling shriek soon followed. The man's face was bloodless. The destruction of his magic treasure had greatly injured his Origin Qi.

Without any further hesitation, he hastily controlled the white hurricane to follow him as he rushed forward. Leaving the desert was now his only chance at life.

At that moment, the black winged ants finished devouring the remnants of the flying knife and didn't move to chase after him. Its next action was cause for disbelief. It gathered together in an instant and flashed with a strange light before turning into a ten-meter-long black lance. Then with a sharp whistle, the lance pierced through the air as if it had been shot from a crossbow.

The sallow-faced man panicked at the sight and hastily exerted the entirety of his magic power to propel the hurricane with further intensity.

The lance of black light struck the white hurricane and pierced through it in an instant.

The spearhead and shaft were completely covered in scarlet blood.

Chapter 462: Ironfire Ants

The hurricane came to an abrupt stop, revealing the sallow-faced old man.

His body listlessly stood in place with the ice shields and green barrier completely destroyed. A fist sized hole appeared where his heart should've been. The hole's edges were pitch black as if it had been caused from incineration.

The man lowered his head to look at his chest and involuntarily touched it with his hand. He wore an expression of astonishment as if he couldn't believe what he saw.

At the moment, the black lance hummed and transformed back into a dense swarm of flying ants. They madly rushed towards the man without restraint, throwing him down and covering his entire body in an instant. Several miserable screams immediately followed before being met with silence.

A short moment later, the winged ants suddenly floated in the air and dropped back down to their original location, blending into the grains of sand. As for where the old man had fallen, there was no trace of him that remained.

Han Li saw this in its entirety from the hilltop. He wore a strange expression from the shock he felt.

“Those are Ironfire Ants! They must be. I didn't think I'd see exotic insects at this location.” Han Li muttered to himself.

When Han Li initially saw the winged ants, he hadn't recognized what they were. Han Li only managed to identify them after he saw them fearlessly receive the attack from the sallow-faced cultivator's magic treasure and then condense into a lance. There were many winged ant spirit insect species in the cultivation world, and they all appeared nearly the same. Cultivators that didn't specialize in insect control techniques would find it difficult to differentiate them.

As a matter of fact, different species of winged ants greatly differed in their degrees of power and ferocity. The more fearsome winged ants would cause even Core Formation cultivators to nervously recoil at the sight of them.

As for the Ironfire Ants, they were ranked thirty seventh on the ranking of exotic insects and were one of the most fearsome winged ant species. Apart from the rank nine Heavencrystal Ants from legend, these ants were possibly the most formidable of their kind. Not only were these winged ants nearly invulnerable to physical attacks, even a majority of magic techniques also had little effect on them. Apart from fire and water attribute magic techniques of mid grade or higher as well as a few specific magic techniques, they were nearly indestructible, possessing abnormal defensive abilities nearly equivalent to that of the Gold Devouring Beetles. In fact, they were even superior to the Gold Devouring Beetles in resisting the attacks of magic treasures.

While they didn't possess the Gold Devouring Beetle's bizarre ability to consume spiritual power, the Ironfire Ants possessed the fearsome abilities to spout black flames and perform swarm transformations.

A colony of Ironfire Ants could transform into a fire attribute magic treasure at will. Its fearsome attack could penetrate through common defensive magic treasures and magic techniques without even the slightest resistance. As a result, the sallow-faced man's miserable death couldn't be considered surprising.

Although the Ironfire Ants weren't considered extinct like the Gold Devouring Beetles, they were seldom seen in the cultivation world. And even if they were seen, the swarm would only consist of a thousand at most.

This was due to the harsh living environment of the Ironfire Ants. Not only did they require a scorching environment to survive, but they also had to stay near large quantities of metal ore. Upon leaving this environment, the Ironfire Ants would quickly grow weakened. It wouldn't take long before their abilities completely disappeared and they reverted into ordinary winged ants.

If it were just that, there would still be many insect controlling cultivators that would desire to use them, even to the point of creating or finding an appropriate environment to breed them in. However, these winged ants possessed a fatal flaw.

Regardless of whether the Ironfire Ants were wild or domesticated, they were incapable of recognizing a master. When someone wished to conduct a master recognition ceremony on the winged ants, each of the ants would self implode without exception, crushing the dreams of many cultivators.

As for the specific cause of this, there was no definite answer. There were those that said the nature of the winged ants was unyielding and didn't allow them to be controlled. There were others that said it had to do with the Ironfire Ant's constitution, while others...

Naturally, there were very few people that knew about the Ironfire Ants in either the Heavenly South Region or the Scattered Star Seas. They had been rarely seen in the last thousand years and their colonies were growing increasingly smaller. They were considered to be nearly extinct.

At that moment, Han Li was looking at the black desert while lost in thought.

It seemed that the black desert was a natural trap for the Ironfire Ants. Although Han Li didn't know how many colonies the desert contained, judging from how the sallow-faced cultivator encountered one after walking just one kilometer, they couldn't be few in number. It was quite possible that colonies of Ironfire ants numbering in the hundreds of thousands existed in the desert as well.

With that thought, Han Li felt a chill run down his back. He then swept his spiritual sense through his storage pouch, counting over a dozen mid grade ice and fire attribute talismans. They should be enough to deal with three Ironfire Ant colonies similarly sized to what he had seen before. However, Han Li would have to be delusional to believe that these talismans were enough to carry him through the desert!

When Han Li set his sights on the several spirit beast pouches of Gold Devouring Beetles, his heart stirred. He pondered whether or not the Gold Devouring Beetles would be exceptionally effective in dealing with the Ironfire Ants.

After all, the Gold Devouring Beetles were higher ranked than the Ironfire Ants, and from the appearance of their shell, they haven't yet evolved to the rumored "Black Gold" stage. They should be half matured like his Gold Devouring Beetles. As such, it would be acceptable for him to test them against one another.

Barely able to suppress his increasing excitement, Han Li pondered for a moment more before deciding that there was no problem in testing his Gold Devouring Beetles against the Ironfire Ants he had just seen. Even if his Gold Devouring Beetles weren't able to deal with them, he still had a few mid grade talismans he could use to defend himself and safely withdraw from the desert.

Han Li's expression grew cold as he rushed down the hilltop, heading straight into the black desert.

After a short moment, Han Li had arrived at the edge of the desert. He gazed at the black sand beneath him and narrowed his eyes. He then grabbed a fistful of sand and brought it close to his eye.

Han Li soon snorted. With a sudden flash of yellow light from his hand, he tightly closed his grip and squeezed. As a result, most of the sand remained uncrushed.

Han Li smirked and slowly muttered to himself, “This isn’t black sand. It’s actually grains of iron ore.”

“But to spread such a dense amount of ore across such a large desert... The master of Heavenvoid Hall was truly an extraordinary person.”

After flinging away the sand in his hand, he stood up and frowned. He then lightly patted the White Rhino Emblem at his waist, enveloping him in a layer of white light.

Because he was earlier evading the sallow-faced cultivator, he was forced to disable it and endure the heat by using his cultivation alone. But now that he was so close to the desert, the overwhelming heat had caused him to be temporarily light-headed. Alarmed, Han Li quickly reactivated the White Rhino Pendant. This was not the time to be concerned with saving magic power.

Without any further hesitation, Han Li looked at the area containing the colony of Ironfire ants and carefully walked over.

The black desert was extremely painful to walk on. The sand was scorching hot and the air itself felt as if it were on fire. Even with the White Rhino Emblem and the Fire Repelling Robes, Han Li still felt suffocated. It felt even hotter than the small path of lava he went through the day before.

After walking over a hundred meters, Han Li sighed and patted his storage pouch, taking out a soft pearl in his hand. Without any

delay, he poured a bit of spiritual power into it. Cold air immediately released from the pearl in a flash of white light.

Han Li suddenly felt himself surrounded by a chill. With roused spirits, Han Li quickened his pace.

As the simultaneous use of both the White Rhino Emblem and the Glacial Ice Pearl greatly increased his magic power consumption, he needed to pass through the desert as quickly as he could.

When Han Li was about two hundred meters away from the location of the Ironfire Ants, he stopped and carefully examined where they would be.

A short moment later, Han Li shook his head.

The concealed Ironfire Ants were extremely difficult to differentiate from the black sand. It was even difficult to see them with his spiritual sense. The ant colony's spiritual Qi fluctuations were extremely faint, presumably because they were innately skilled at restraining their Qi.

It seemed that using his spiritual sense to spot the winged ants from a distance wouldn't do. He'd have to try using his Gold Devouring Beetles.

Chapter 463: An Opportune Encounter

Han Li raised his hands with a solemn expression, and tossed several spirit beast pouches into the air. As they floated in the air, he formed his hands into an incantation gesture, causing the pouches to open and release countless Gold Devouring Beetles. They formed a cloud of shining gold and silver shimmers in the air. In regards to numbers, the Gold Devouring Beetles were far fewer to the recently seen colony of Ironfire Ants.

With his confidence strengthened from looking at the the gold-silver insect swarm, he pointed to the ground not far away and softly shouted, “Go!”

With a buzz, the glittering cloud flew forward, moving to descend and blanket the ground.

But before they touched the ground, a black cloud of ants suddenly rose to meet the swarm of Gold Devouring Beetles.

In the instant that the two sides clashed, huge streams of dark flame suddenly spouted out from the black ant colony, violently enveloping the Gold Devouring Beetles in black radiance. It was clear the ant colony had realized the Gold Devouring Beetles were fearsome and rushed to strike first by using their innate flames.

Were it another breed of insects, the strange flames would’ve burnt a majority of them at the very least. But not only were the Gold Devouring Beetles completely unscathed by the black flames, the black flames themselves were cleanly devoured. Once the

flames were gone, the beetles charged forward with a buzz.

The two insect swarms fiercely clashed, interweaving colors of black, silver, and gold. After only a moment of tearing away at each other, countless dead insects began to successively fall to the ground with piercing screeches. A vast majority of them were black with only a sparse few being gold and silver.

In just a short moment, the Gold Devouring Beetles had achieved an overwhelming victory, exterminating a majority of the ants.

The Ironfire Ants also sensed that things were far from good. Their remnants released a weak cry and suddenly gathered together to form a jet-black arrow. They shot past the Gold Devouring Beetles in an attempt to escape.

But at that moment, a streak of dazzling azure swordlight pierced through the air and chopped down at the arrow. The arrow trembled and was greatly slowed down.

In that moment of delay, the Gold Devouring Beetles swarmed around the arrow. In the blink of an eye, the black arrow was submerged in a sea of gold and silver and could no longer be seen. By the time the insect swarm dispersed, the arrow had completely disappeared.

At that moment, Han Li slowly walked over and serenely looked at the dead insects on the floor. He silently pondered for a moment while clasping his chin.

Only about several hundred of the dead insects belonged to the Gold Devouring Beetles, a trifling amount. The Gold Devouring Beetles' decisive victory clearly illustrated the superiority of the Gold Devouring Beetles. After all, the Ironfire Ants had outnumbered the Gold Devouring Beetles ten to one.

After a moment of analysis, Han Li revealed an expression of relief. It seemed that his Gold Devouring Beetles would be able to get him through the black desert without problem.

After taking another look at the ground littered with dead insects, a strange expression flashed through his eyes. A low whistle left his mouth. The gold-silver insect cloud shrieked in response and fell from the sky, cleanly devouring the dead insects like an autumn wind sweeping away fallen leaves. They then obediently flew back into Han Li's spirit beast pouches.

Having put away the pouches, Han Li gazed into the depths of the black desert before walking forward without hesitation.

...

Han Li motionlessly stood in the distance as he expressionlessly gazed at the sky.

The largest battle that his Gold Devouring Beetles had fought since entering the desert was currently taking place in the sky. Countless Gold Devouring Beetles and Ironfire Ants were scattered across the skies at a low altitude, mutually devouring each other. Dead insects rained from the sky, forming a thin, dense layer on

the ground. It made for a truly shocking sight!

Han Li's brow creased during a moment of carelessness. Although only about a day had passed, he had already lost nearly ten thousand Gold Devouring Beetles. It was as if he'd encounter a colony of Ironfire Ants every short distance he walked, numbering anywhere from three thousand to ten thousand.

But now, he'd encountered a tremendously large Ironfire Ant colony that numbered at around fifty thousand. He reckoned that this battle would result in the deaths of at least eight thousand of his Gold Devouring Beetles.

It was no surprise that Han Li felt regretful. The Gold Devouring Beetles took a long period of time to breed. Who knew when he'd be able to next replenish their numbers?

After the time it took to finish a cup of tea, the ant colony retreated in defeat. Apart from the several thousand survivors that managed to retreat, the winged ants had been cleanly devoured by the Gold Devouring Beetles.

Han Li was uninterested in wasting time pursuing the remaining Ironfire Ants. Instead, he turned his gaze towards the Glacial Ice Pearl and continued on his way with roused spirits.

He supposed that he was currently at the center of the desert which was why he had encountered such a large colony of ants. He had better be more vigilant on the path moving forward, else he would waste the much needed magic power to fuel his heat

repelling magic treasures, leaving himself in a dire situation.

After walking about twenty kilometers, Han Li's expression froze. He stared to the right with narrowed eyes. After a short moment, he revealed a trace of suspicion and suddenly changed his direction to a dune he was looking at.

When Han Li arrived at the top of the dune, he unconsciously frowned. He had spotted yet another colony of Ironfire Ants in his line of sight.

This colony of winged ants only numbered about ten thousand, and were attacking a sphere of faint blue light. The sphere of light was on the verge of collapse. As it flickered, the image of a person with a strained appearance leaked through.

Han Li gazed at this with complete indifference.

At that moment, the Ironfire Ants had transformed into a keen longsword blazing with black flame and fiercely chopped at the sphere of light.

Han Li was certain that this person was doomed. But then, an unremarkable, dark green pellet shot out of the light sphere. Just as the pellet touched the black sword, a fist sized dark green flame violently combusted. The ants that were wrapped up by the flame rapidly dispersed with nearly a hundred Ironfire Ants falling to the ground.

Han Li felt surprised. That dark green pellet was an exceptional treasure. It was fearsome enough to burn away at fire attributed Ironfire Ants without resistance. An inconceivable display! It seemed he was still quite ignorant of the countless unique treasures that existed in the cultivation world.

The appearance of the green flame infuriated the ant swarm. They scattered and wildly charged towards the light sphere without any intent to retreat.

The cultivator inside the light sphere seemed to no longer have many pellets remaining. By the time the Ironfire Ants had scattered, it was already too late to shoot a second pellet, resulting in a helpless situation. However, he had also become aware of Han Li's existence. As he was under attack from the Ironfire Ants, he occasionally glanced in Han Li's direction.

Han Li indifferently turned away and continued on his path. He currently had no mind to acquire his treasures or waste the lives of his Gold Devouring Beetles. His Gold Devouring Beetles had far more value in this strange desert than ordinary treasures, and he didn't wish to squander them in vain.

But who could've known that just as he had taken his first step, he suddenly heard the transmission of a hoarse, familiar voice from the light sphere.

"Fellow Daoist Han! Please wait! This is Yuan Yao! I must trouble Fellow Daoist Han to assist me! I will definitely express my gratitude afterwards!" Yuan Yao's voice was filled with anxious panic.

“Yuan Yao?” Han Li suddenly stopped and hesitated for a moment before slowly turning around.

This was truly a small world! In an area as large as the Path of Molten Rock, he actually managed to encounter this woman he could barely be considered acquainted with. Unbelievable!

Since she could be considered somewhat of a friend, Han Li felt reluctant to leave her to die. Moreover, he had initially considered finding her for a secret matter. This was just killing two birds with one stone.

After looking at the dimmed light sphere and quickly muttering to himself, he tossed a spirit beast pouch from his waist and released a swarm of Gold Devouring Beetles into the fray.

When she saw this, she was left speechless. The Gold Devouring Beetles only numbered about a thousand but were able to easily exterminate a swarm of Ironfire Ants that was over ten times its size.

She had finally recovered from her shock when Han Li calmly retrieved his Gold Devouring Beetles, and she quickly put away her blue light sphere.

Yuan Yao's complexion had paled from the expended magic power, but this only made her appear even more endearing.

Her black robes had already been replaced for thin, well-fit clothes, revealing her graceful, youthful figure. Her body was also drenched with the fragrant scent of her sweat, filling the air with deadly allure.

Han Li was stunned by this, but he soon recovered.

Yuan Yao saluted Han Li with a beaming smile and spoke with a charming voice, “Yuan Yao cannot thank Fellow Daoist Han enough for his rescue!”

Chapter 464: Weeping Soul Pearl

Han Li glanced at her and calmly said, “It was but a minor effort! Now that Fellow Daoist Yuan is out of danger, I will be taking my leave.” He then turned around and walked away without any intent to stay.

Still shaken from her near death encounter, Yuan Yao turned pale at this and was incapable of staying reserved. She hastily said, “Brother Han, I still haven’t expressed my thanks for saving my life.” The gorgeous woman’s delicate appearance tugged at the hearts of those who saw it.

However, Han Li didn’t turn around and merely gave an indifferent response, “I don’t need your thanks. I merely assisted you for a moment and cannot help you the entire way through. Do your best, Lady Yuan!”

After this was said, Han Li was already forty meters away, walking at a breakneck speed.

This only caused Yuan Yao’s pale face to become even more panicked. She no longer possessed the strength to resist the scorching heat, let alone any more Ironfire Ants she may encounter. She was unable to give up as Han Li held the string that her life hung upon!

But as a result, her charming pleas were completely ignored as Han Li further walked away.

She revealed apprehension at Han Li's indifferent response and could only say what Han Li expected to hear.

She gritted her teeth and said, "Please wait! So long as Fellow Daoist Han is willing to protect me on this path, I will bestow a grand treasure to you. Your magic power won't be used in vain."

"A grand treasure?" Han Li stayed still, revealing slight hesitation.

Seeing that Han Li appeared interested, she didn't dare to be negligent. "I still have many Green Flameblasts that I am willing to give Fellow Daoist."

"That was the green pellet that you had used a moment ago? It is quite the uncommon item." Han Li slowly turned around with an expression of deep consideration.

Since he had acted to save the woman, he naturally didn't intend on truly abandoning her. Besides, he had saved her with another reason in mind. His previous act was merely taking one step back so he could take two steps forward. Now that this woman took the initiative to request his aid, his objective was fulfilled. He reckoned that if he were to demand greater concessions, she could only begrudgingly accept.

This beautiful woman clearly understood this. Regardless of whether it was for paying Han Li for his previous rescue or his continued protection, Yuan Yao had no choice but to continue with a helpless expression, "The Green Flameblasts are firebombs

secretly refined by the Devil Dao's Pure Yang Sect. Not only does each one require a great quantity of rare resources to refine, but it also consumes a great amount of time. Their might is equivalent to a Nascent Soul cultivator's Yang Essence Flame. I still have three of them and will give them to you." The woman's expression grew more determined as she spoke. She extended her snow white hand to reveal three pellets shining with a gentle green light.

At that moment, Han Li unhurriedly walked back over and glanced at the three pellets. He calmly said, "These Green Flameblasts truly are an exceptional treasure, but it isn't enough for me to take such a large risk. Bringing you through this path will double my magic power consumption at the very least. Does Fellow Daoist Yuan truly think this is worth that level of danger?" Han Li's words faintly concealed a trace of mockery.

Yuan Yao's beautiful expression fluctuated for a long while before settling on a charming smile.

"Brother Han, please don't hesitate to state your conditions. This young woman doesn't wish to continue speaking in circles. Could it be that Fellow Daoist wishes for me to give my heart to you?" Yuan Yao turned her hips and puffed up her soft chest, showing off their exceptional plumpness. Her bright eyes were filled with a peculiar haze that was beyond flirtatious.

Han Li was somewhat stunned by the woman's gorgeous beauty. But he soon narrowed his eyes and sized up her dainty, well-rounded body. The woman blushed at his unrestrained gaze. Her beautiful eyes became increasingly bright and captivating as if capable of enrapturing the deepest depths of a man's heart.

Han Li stroked his chin and calmly spoke with a radiant gaze, “As expected, Yuan Yao’s full use of her charming technique along with her beautiful appearance is without match! However, since it has no effect on me, Fellow Daoist had best save her magic power for survival instead.”

Tearing off her beautiful guise and halting her charming technique, she flusteredly said, “Humph! What a crude, uncultured boor! You don’t hold the compassion for women in the slightest.”

Han Li insincerely smiled, saying, “How could Lady Yao say that? If this weren’t such a place as dangerous as the Heavenvoid Hall, I definitely wouldn’t have refused your seductions. But, here we are, hehe....”

“You sure like to dream. If it weren’t this place, how else could I have possibly thrown myself into your arms?” Yuan Yao glared at Han Li with a resentful gaze.

“It seems I’ve saved the wrong person. Since this is the case, I don’t wish for Fellow Daoist Yuan to give her heart to me. And there is also no need to express your thanks for my rescue. I’ll be taking me leave.” As if to deliberately anger the woman, he cupped his hands to her as if he were about to set off.

Seeing this, Yuan Yao’s words immediately grew soft and she returned to being lovingly pitiful. “Brother Han! It was my wrong, please don’t be angry. Please don’t hesitate to say what must be

done to receive your assistance through the Path of Molten Rock. I will absolutely do as you ask! Could it be that Daoist doesn't wish to help this poor woman despite being her acquaintance for a hundred years and a fellow companion that accompanied you through the ghost mist? As for treasure, apart from these Green Flameblasts, I have no other treasures to give you."

Although Han Li was wearing a mysterious smile, he inwardly felt astonished.

Yuan Yao was a truly fickle person. Standing tall one second, and submitting the next! From her currently powerless pleads, her recent mature, flirtatious charms, to her proud, elegant impression from the very beginning, all of them had given Han Li a distinct, unique impression. How truly strange! As this woman was capable of cultivating to Core Formation stage from Qi Condensation stage in only a hundred years, she was by no means ordinary.

With this thought, Han Li started to mutter himself. Yuan Yao revealed a hopeful expression as she nervously stared at him.

After a short moment, he looked up and spoke with seemingly great reluctance, "Since Lady Yuan is an acquaintance I had met over a hundred years ago, I would appear truly heartless if I do not protect you. However, I was never someone to work for free. If Fellow Daoist Yuan Yao wishes for me to take her through the Path of Molten Rock, then how about she gives me the Weeping Soul Beast? I am extremely interested in the beast's soul absorption abilities."

After walking around so many pretenses and plots, Han Li finally stated what he wanted from the woman from the very start. With this strange beast, he'd be more confident in working together with the old ghost Bone Sage. From what he had seen, this Weeping Soul Beast was by no means weak.

“You want the Weeping Soul Beast?” Yuan Yao eyes widened after hearing Han Li as if she couldn't believe what he had said.

“What? Will it not do?” Han Li's expression sunk, and his voice grew cold.

“If I give the Weeping Soul Beast to you, you will take me through the Path of Molten Rock?” Yuan Yao asked Han Li this question word by word as she stared him with a strange expression.

“That's right!” Han Li frowned but still spoke with certainty. He faintly felt that that there was something amiss.

“That's good. Then I will give it to you.” After Han Li confirmed this, he immediately took a spirit beast pouch at her waist and gave it to Han Li without the slightest hesitation.

Han Li blinked with a nervous heart. Why was it that it appeared that she was so impatient to give the Weeping Soul Beast to him. Could it be that there is something wrong with the Weeping Soul Beast?

After thinking for a moment, he calmly took the spirit beast pouch into his hand. He swept his spiritual sense inside to see the Weeping Soul Beast soundly asleep.

Han Li nodded his head and put the spirit beast pouch at his waist. Just as he thought to say something, Yuan Yao opened her mouth and spat out a dark grey pearl into her palm.

“This is the Weeping Soul Pearl. It is the item used to control the Weeping Soul Beast. If you refine this like you would with an ordinary magic treasure, the Weeping Soul Beast will be forever yours. I haven’t owned the beast for long and haven’t completely refined its pearl. You can forcefully erase the traces of my spiritual sense from it without problem.” Yuan Yao chuckled and gave it to Han Li.

Han Li looked at the Weeping Soul Pearl with interest and didn’t move to take it. This pearl was something that he had known about from Fairy Violet Spirit when he inquired about the Weeping Soul Beast.

He later realized that she was incapable of smoothly controlling the Weeping Soul Beast because she hadn’t fully refined the Weeping Soul Pearl during that time. This had raised his interest in acquiring the strange beast.

But seeing as she had so quickly gave it to him with delighted expression as if she ridding herself of a demonic plague, Han Li grew greatly hesitant and didn’t hurry to take the pearl.

Chapter 465: Surging Undercurrents

Yuan Yao's luminous eyes stirred. She chuckled and said, "What? Does Brother Han not want this animal? Or does he fear that I've given him a false Weeping Soul Pearl?" Her voice concealed a teasing tone.

Han Li didn't immediately reply and examined the pearl for a moment before saying, "I can tell it is legitimate from its Yin Ghost Aura. However, I do not know much about the Weeping Soul Beast. Could it that my body would suffer from refining the pearl?"

After Han Li said this, he rigidly stared into Yuan Yao's beautiful eyes.

"How could that be? If there was ever such a problem, I wouldn't have personally refined it. However, refining the pearl makes oneself feel unwell. So long as one bears with it, there is no problem." Yuan Yao had a calm expression and spoke with a uncaring tone.

"Feel unwell?" Han Li wrinkled his brow and stared at the woman for a moment before turning his gaze towards the pearl. He was sure that that she hadn't been entirely truthful, but he couldn't make it out as of now. After muttering to himself for a moment, he decided to take the pearl and put it away for later research. If it were truly harmful, he just wouldn't refine the pearl. So long as he had the pearl, he would be able to control the Weeping Soul Beast all the same.

After putting away the Weeping Soul Pearl, he calmly said, “Let’s go! I will do my utmost to protect Lady Yuan for the rest of the way. But let’s get the ugly talk out of the way first. If I come across a danger that fully occupies my attention, Fellow Daoist Yuan had best flee by herself!” He then touched the Glacial Ice Pearl that floated above his head, causing it to suddenly envelope them with chilled air.

“Of course. I understand what would happen if we were to truly encounter such a circumstance. However, I am quite confident that with Brother Han’s gold and silver beetles, the odds of such a situation occurring is quite small.” The gorgeous woman wrinkled her nose for a moment before revealing a smile as charming as a flower. .

Han Li bluntly admired the beautiful scene before him for a moment before wordlessly turning around and setting off. When Yuan Yao saw this, she followed after him with light steps and a faint smile. She soon walked alongside Han Li, creating a rather intimate appearance.

This was because the closer she was to Han Li’s side, the more cool air that was present from the Glacial Ice Pearl. She naturally wanted to feel more comfortable.

“Now that I think of it, the path of ice and fire is somewhat strange. How could there be a black desert here along with such fierce winged ants? Not only can those ants fearlessly endure magic treasure attacks, they can spout black flames and can undergo swarm transformations. They also managed to break through one of my ancient defensive treasures. If I didn’t have the

Green Flameblasts, I wouldn't have lasted long enough to meet Brother Han." Yuan Yao grumbled with a relaxed expression as she continued walking. It was clear that she didn't recognize the Ironfire Ants.

Han Li was stunned by her words. He couldn't help but ask her with, "The black desert hasn't been seen before?" He felt that the appearance of such fierce exotic insects at this location was somewhat odd. Apart from cultivators with extraordinary abilities and exceptionally powerful magic treasures, it would be unlikely for even a late Core Formation cultivator to leave the black desert unscathed.

"No! This is the first time the black desert has appeared on the path of molten rock. Previously, other cultivators that underwent this trial merely faced high temperatures and dangerous areas. At most, they would encounter a few flame beasts as well. But these bizarre winged ants haven't been seen before. Had it been known that such ferocious winged ants existed on the path of molten rock, far fewer cultivators would've been willing to brave it." Yuan Yao replied without hesitation. Despite appearing to know quite much, she remained puzzled by the appearance of the ants.

"If that's the case, there must be something amiss with the paths of ice and fire!" Han Li muttered to himself with a contemplative expression.

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"This is completely abnormal. Someone must've taken action." In a forest of blood red icicles on the path of profound ice, Layman

Qing Yi looked at the sky with his arms behind his back.

Countless floating inch-large spheres of azure lights revolved around him, separating him from a dense swarm of several hundred silver beasts that surrounded him. These small beasts strongly resembled mice. Not only was their fur sparkling with silver light, but they also had a small, delicate horn on their heads.

They surrounded the old man as streaks of silver light and continuously struck at him like arrows with their horns. Each of the strikes released a thunderous boom in a display of astonishing momentum. However, the azure lights surrounding the old man's body remained motionless, completely unaffected by the erratic attacks of silver light.

“Courting death!” The Confucian-robed old man grew annoyed by the strange mice's attacks. After lowering his head towards them, he swept his sleeves outward with a cold expression. A burst of azure light immediately spread out, illuminating an area of forty meters in blinding brilliance.

After a short moment, the azure light faded away to reveal a ground filled with the corpses of the small, silver-furred beasts. Their bodies were densely pricked by thin azure needles that shone with a cold blue light.

Layman Qing Yi's expression was unchanged. It was obvious that the outcome was as he had expected. After indifferently glancing at the ground, he extended his shriveled right hand and lightly swept it across the air. The needles flew back towards him as azure streaks of light and disappeared into his body.

“Silverlight Mice! How could these damned animals appear at only the second trial? Could it be...” The old man pondered motionlessly and his expression grew sullen.

“Humph! Since these Silverlight Mice have appeared on the Path of Profound Crystal, the Path of Molten Rock should also have something equally inconceivable. I’m afraid that Youngster Han will encounter quite the problem!” Layman Qing Yi coldly snorted with annoyance and spoke to himself with slight apprehension. Soon after, he deeply sigh, disappearing from sight with several blurs.

The forest of blood-red icicles appeared quite strange with its ground littered with the corpses of the small silver beasts.

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In some lightless place in the great canyon, two voices were calmly having a chat in the darkness.

“Weren’t you too sloppy, using both Ironfire Ants and Silverlight Mice? Although we’ve always played our tricks in each of the treasure hunts, they were well hidden. The appearance of the black desert and blood icicle forest is far too brazen. Apart from the few that didn’t encounter these obstacles, I fear that a majority of Devil and Righteous Dao cultivators will have died. When that time comes, those Nascent Soul cultivators will no longer be fooled.” A voice spoke with slight fear.

“Fool? Did you truly believe that our previous actions in the Heavenvoid Hall were unnoticed by the Righteous and Devil Daos? They had long figured them out but they chose to feign ignorance due to our Star Palace’s power. They also knew that we could only control a few of the Heavenvoid Hall’s minor restrictions that wouldn’t result in too great a death. In each treasure hunt, it would merely result in a few more deaths of the Righteous and Devil Dao Core Formation cultivators.” The other voice unhurriedly replied.

“The black desert and the blood icicle forest are the most ferocious restrictions I can control. It is only somewhat of a pity for them to be used like this. After all, as the previous generation masters of the Star Palace, we’ve spent quite some effort to grasp them.” He unhurriedly spoke with a tone of regret.

“There is nothing to regret! Right now, there are rumors widely spread that the two sages have reached a crucial point in their seclusion and cannot be contacted, causing the inhabitants of the Scattered Star Seas to be alarmed. However, this has caused the inner disciples of the Star Palace to become restless. They are completely reliant on us old fellows to handle the arduous affairs of the palace. With the Righteous and Devil Dao starting to stir, it is becoming far more difficult to suppress them. Although each of the sides alone prove no threat to us, it will become dire once they join forces.

“The only method we currently have is to forcefully cripple the strength of the two sides and cause them to become doubtful and unsure of our true circumstances. After all, given the many years that the Star Palace has governed the Scattered Star Seas, it is impossible for them to not have misgivings. So long as we can drag

this on for a moment more, the two sages will be able to leave seclusion. At that time, even if the two sides joined hands, we won't have to worry about them. Our two Lord Sages' Divine Essencefused Light will be able to force that madwoman from Myriad Gates of Enlightenment and Devil Saint Island's Archsaint of the Six Paths to retreat."

"The usage of the Ironfire Ants and Silverlight Mice restrictions were unavoidable. Apart from these two restrictions, none of the others are nearly as destructive against Core Formation cultivators. They all lack the proper fierceness to admonish them and reflect our unyielding attitude. As for your fears of the two sides using this as a pretext to act, they are groundless. Those among the dead aren't their own personal disciples, and they are our opposition in the contest for the Heavenvoid Cauldron. What we've done isn't enough for them to act! At most, they'll be inwardly seething."

The cold voice sneered as he gave his long explanation.

The first voice remained silent as if approving of the other's judgements.

Chapter 466: Refined Crystal

“How many swarms have we hit since we’ve traveled together?” Han Li slowly asked as he looked at the insect corpses on the ground.

“Seven! Although we’ve encountered many ant swarms, we haven’t encountered any that numbered in the ten thousands.” Standing at Han Li’s side, Yuan Yao obediently replied.

They’d already traveled together for half a day. Han Li frowned at hearing the number and his expression grew sullen as if he had worries on his mind.

After some thought, he swept his arm towards his Gold Devouring Beetles that had finished consuming the corpses. They followed his command, transforming into a cloud of sparkling light as they flew back into his floating spirit beast pouches. Han Li then calmly put them away.

“What? Fellow Daoist Han appears unhappy? We’ve already crossed through the center of the desert, the most dangerous area. The path out should prove to be much safer.” Yuan Yao blinked upon seeing Han Li’s expression and spoke with slight confusion.

“Safer? Do you really believe so?” Han Li glanced at Yuan Yao and sneered.

“Could it be that there are still more dangers ahead?” Yuan Yao unconsciously frowned and spoke without confidence.

With an indifferent expression, Han Li said, “I don’t know if there are more dangers ahead, but I am certain of something. We will be quite lucky to not encounter any ant swarms that don’t have any late stage ants. As of now, we’ve yet to encounter any megacolonyes that contain late grade ants. We have to be more careful on the way out. If we don’t encounter any mishaps after half a day more of walking, we should be truly safe.”

Yuan Yao’s complexion turned white, but after a short moment, she feigned indifference. She forced a smile and said, “Aren’t you being paranoid?”

“I hope that is the case!” Han Li didn’t continue speaking despite knowing that the late stage ants existed among the Ironfire Ants. Although the strength of late stage ants are ordinary, their astonishing intelligence would be certain to prove more than troublesome.

Due to their previous conversation, they remained completely silent for the next four hours.

However, something strange had occurred. They hadn’t encountered a single ant colony on their path. Yuan Yao had become conscious that something was amiss, and her face revealed a trace of unease.

But, when they mindlessly climbed up a tall sand dune, they saw an astonishing scene ahead of them.

“This is...” Yuan Yao wore a terrified expression. Her red lips moved several times, but no words came out. While Han Li’s expression was a bit more calm, he was still quite alarmed.

In the sand ahead of them was a solidarity pillar of ice with a height of about a hundred meters.

The ice pillar was extremely cold. Not only did it flicker with faint white light, it also contained a black giant of the same height. The giant appeared hideous. It had wide, glaring eyes and a smooth, shiny bald head, and was frozen inside the pillar of ice. How strange!

After staring at it for a moment, Han Li immediately swept his eyes past the nearby sand. The nearby ground was filled with holes of all sizes as if a great battle had been fought there.

A strange expression stirred from Han Li’s eyes as they fell upon the giant once more. But when Han Li gazed at one of the giant’s eyes, he couldn’t help but shout in surprise.

“Did Fellow Daoist Han discover something?” Yuan Yao couldn’t help but turn her head and ask after hearing Han Li.

Han Li slightly smiled in response. He then narrowed his eyes and released his spiritual sense. After confirming that nothing was concealed in the nearby area, he bluntly walked down the sand dune and towards the pillar of ice in large strides.

“Humph!” Yuan Yao sulked and expressed discontent at Han Li’s attempt to remain mysterious, but she still followed him. After all, she’d have to waste magic power to resist the high temperatures if she left the range of Han Li’s Glacial Ice Pearl.

“Winged Ants!” When Han Li arrived about forty meters away from the pillar of ice, Yuan Yao spoke with astonishment.

At her current distance, she was finally able to clearly see the giant’s true appearance, a formation of countless black winged ants! From a distance it could be passed off as genuine – a truly inconceivable affair! But as the Ironfire Ants remained completely motionless inside the pillar of ice, it was unknown whether they were alive or dead.

At that moment, Han Li stopped and started muttering to himself as he gazed at the ice pillar ahead of him.

After examining it, Yuan Yao slowly said, “Since these ants are already dead, let’s go on our way! It’s a waste of time to remain here.”

“Are you truly certain they are dead? They still could be alive.” Han Li felt doubtful.

“How could they still be alive?” Yuan Yao glanced at Han Li with astonishment and spoke with disbelief. “The Myriad Gates of Enlightenment has an ancient treasure named the Profound Yellow Mirror. Have you not heard of it? So long as the treasure reflects on something living, they will grow still from terror and

become trapped in a pillar of icy crystal. After several days, the crystal ice pillar will eventually disappear.”

“I’ve never heard of it before.” Han Li’s honest answer left the woman wide eyed and somewhat speechless. Han Li circled the huge ice pillar several more times before speaking with a pensive expression, “According to what you’ve said, these insects were disposed off by Wan Tianming.”

“If it wasn’t him, then who? What are you thinking? Apart from time itself, this crystal ice cannot be broken by ordinary magic treasures. Otherwise, the Profound Yellow Mirror wouldn’t have such a famous name.” Yuan Yao glanced at Han Li as if she had guessed what he was thinking and smiled.

After Han Li heard this, he calmly glanced at her. He then moved his hands at his waist and tossed out all of his spirit beast pouches. A huge cloud of Gold Devouring Beetles then suddenly appeared in the air.

“Go!” Han Li bluntly pointed at the ice crystal pillar. The gold-silver beetle cloud suddenly descended upon it and densely covered the pillar’s peak in an instant.

“You still intend on having your beetles consume the winged ants’ remains? Your beetles may be ferocious, but they can’t chew through...” Yuan Yao’s sentence remained half finished.

This was because the giant that was trapped by the crystal ice pillar was quickly being cut down at an amazing speed. In the blink

of an eye, the giant's head had disappeared from view.

Yuan Yao's small mouth gaped open and didn't close until a while later.

Under the woman's astonished gaze, the Gold Devouring Beetles had completely devoured the huge pillar of crystal ice alongside the giant trapped within. All that remained was an egg-sized crystal ball that mysteriously shined with black light.

Han Li smiled upon seeing it appear and walked several steps forward before bending down to pick it up.

This item was called a "Refined Crystal". It was a rare material that was formed in the abdomen by beings that had frequent meals of ore that remained undigested. Although the cultivators that knew of its existence were a sparse few, Han Li had read a rumor of it from an ancient book and was unsure of its validity. But when he saw the pearl contained within the Ironfire Ant Giant's eye, he suddenly recalled this and his heart began to stir. He didn't expect that he would truly acquire the refined crystal.

It was a peak supplementary material for strengthening magic tools. So long as this material was joined together with a magic treasure, not only would its might increase, but the resilience of the magic treasure's body would immediately strengthen to a point of disbelief. After that point, it would be hard to imagine anything that could break it.

It was also unknown whether Wan Tianming had not known

about this item or had overlooked it from negligence. Either way, it had benefited Han Li. So long as he took the time to refine it into his Bamboo Cloudswarm Swords, their strength would surely increase by another level.

While Yuan Yao didn't know about the refined crystal, she knew it was certain to be a good item from Han Li's happy expression. However, she had tactfully remained silent about things that had little to do with her.

The two continued on their way in silence.

...

In an extremely crude stone hall with an area of about two hundred meters and a height of about thirty meters was a transportation formation. Apart from the transportation formation at the center, each of the walls had a huge stone gate about ten meters tall. At the moment, each of the gates was sealed as tightly as a prison cell.

There were also about a hundred mismatched stone tables and chairs. These stone chairs were sparsely occupied by six cultivators with various expressions. Grandmaster Zenith Yin, Layman Qing Yi and Wan Tianming were the only Nascent Soul cultivators present. The other cultivators were late Core Formation cultivators; none of whom could be considered weak.

Each of their expressions were sullen, and they possessed no interest in talking. The stone hall's atmosphere was beyond

stifling!

Grandmaster Zenith Yin was particularly dreadful with his ashen complexion. He stared at the transportation formation as his eyes continuously flickered with ominous glints.

Chapter 467: More Treasures

These cultivators were the first ones to reach the end of the Path of Ice and Fire. While the black desert and blood icicle forest naturally proved to be no threat to the Nascent Soul cultivators, the late Core Formation cultivators suffered quite badly to escape them. As for the weaker cultivators, their odds were grim. Only a few of them had managed to make it here so far.

Zenith Yin and Layman Qing Yi naturally worried about Han Li's fate. If Han Li died on the Path of Molten Rock, his Bloodjade Spider would've perished with him, leaving them without any cause for joy. Zenith Yin, who stood to benefit the most, felt especially terrible, far worse than Layman Qing Yi did.

Although Wan Tianming appeared calm, he had lowered his head and was silently staring at his wide, thin hands with an icy gaze.

Naturally, these three Nascent Soul cultivators knew of the strange changes of the Path of Ice and Fire. They were certain that these changes had to do with the Star Palace elders that had yet to appear, causing them all to clench their teeth in resentment and feel great trepidation.

What was the intent behind the Star Palace's actions? Could it be they truly wanted to tear away at the faces of both the Righteous and Devilish Daos?

Time slowly passed by underneath this stifling atmosphere. Man Huzi, Tian Wuxi, the old farmer, Wu Chou, and the Bone Sage all

eventually arrived from the transportation formation from the stone palace. These people either had wretched expressions or were gritting their teeth in fuming rage. They were clearly inwardly cursing at the Star Palace elders for causing these changes.

As of current, it was only half a day more before the Path of Ice and Fire were sealed off. Zenith Yin's expression had originally soften upon seeing Wu Chou appear. But with Han Li still missing, his face grew unsightly once more.

Wu Chou was able to pass through the Path of Ice and Fire unscathed because he had fortunately been given an ancient protective treasure beforehand. Zenith Yin didn't expect he would need to give Han Li such a treasure in order to protect himself.

Presumably, Qing Yi and Man Huzi also felt remorse from this. After all, Qing Yi and Man Huzi also had many powerful ancient treasures on hand. Had they given some of them to Han Li, they wouldn't have to worry about his survival.

With that thought, Zenith Yin gloomily glanced at the old man and Man Huzi.

The Confucian-robed old man was currently gazing at the transportation formation with a fluctuating expression, appearing to be thinking of something. Man Huzi was gazing at the hall's roof with his chin moving as he muttered to himself. It was clear that he was pondering about something as well.

Seeing this, Zenith Yin's pent-up rage grew stronger, but his heart soon grew calm. He merely had to face reality and consider his steps moving forward without the Bloodjade Spider.

At that moment, the Bone Sage was sitting cross-legged on a stone table. His eyes were half open, appearing as if he were in the middle of refining Qi. Although he was slightly surprised by Han Li's absence, it made sense. According to his view, Han Li's true strength was at most that of a late Core Formation cultivator. He merely had a fifty percent chance of making it through the strange transformations of the Path of Ice and Fire. But without Han Li's assistance, he feared he lacked the strength to deal with Zenith Yin.

The Bone Sage became unsure whether or not he could take action inside Heavenvoid Hall. Perhaps he would look for another suitable opportunity and take some time to better prepare himself, increasing his odds of success.

Feeling helpless, the Bone Sage couldn't help but inwardly curse at the Star Palace elders for a long while.

As for Wan Tianming and the other Righteous Dao cultivators, they also had bellies full of grievances. They had no choice but to alter their original plans of drawing support from the Core Formation cultivators.

As a multitude of various attitudes and sinister designs stirred among those inside the stone hall, the two white clothed Star Palace elders suddenly appeared in the transportation formation at the center of the hall. At that moment, everyone gazed at the two

cultivators with menacing expressions.

The kindly-faced white clothed man ignored their icy gazes and swept his gaze across the room. He then deeply sighed and said, “Sigh! Just which of you imprudent Fellow Daoists activated those ferocious restrictions on the Path of Ice and Fire? You stirred up huge changes in the canyon. Us two were unable to find a way to reverse these changes, resulting in a loss of many Daoists from the cultivation world. We are quite ashamed at this failure and will beg for forgiveness from the Star Palace Sages when we return, spending over a hundred years in meditation.” He appeared as if he were truly lamentful.

Having heard that, the Righteous and Devilish Dao cultivators shamelessly cursed them out in their hearts. They planned on cleanly brushing the matter aside with those frivolous words as if the affair had nothing to do with them..

However, what happened next was just as the two had anticipated. Although the people in the palace coldly glared at them, none of them took the initiative to question them. Man Huzi, Wan Tianming, and the other Nascent Soul eccentrics fiercely glanced at them several times, but they eventually turned away, each minding their own business.

It seemed none still dared to easily provoke the Star Palace.

After the two white haired elder glanced at each other with a smile, they sat down in a corner and closed their eyes in meditation.

Although many still felt unresigned, nobody was willing to take the initiative to act.

In that next moment, two people appeared with a flash of white light from the transportation formation, Han Li and Yuan Yao.

In the moment Zenith Yin saw Han Li appear, his eyes brightened and he shouted, “Han Li!” He then waved his arms towards Han Li with a smile, having him immediately come over.

Man Huzi and Layman Qing Yi also revealed expressions of pleasant surprise. After exchanging a glance with one another, the two bluntly walked over to Zenith Yin’s side.

Han Li let out a sigh in his mind. After saying a few words to Yuan Yao, Han Li roused his spirits and walked over towards Zenith Yin. As Han Li fortunately knew that these Devil Dao eccentrics needed him in their hunt for treasure, he was able to remain calm. In addition, Han Li felt particularly assured after spotting the Bone Sage when he entered the large hall.

After Zenith Yin called Han Li, he warmly greeted him and assumed the standard role of a kind master, inquiring about the circumstances of the Path of Molten Rock.

Han Li didn’t go far into detail and merely gave a short, vague description to go through the motions. He understood that Zenith Yin didn’t actually care about the matter.

As he had expected, Grandmaster Zenith Yin didn't pursue the matter and praised Han Li instead.

The Confucian-robed old man looked at Han Li with a smile and would occasionally chime in as if he was quite concerned with Han Li.

As befitted him, Man Huzi indifferently watched from the side and didn't take the initiative to ask any questions. However, when Han Li returned the Glacial Ice Pearl to him, Man Huzi waved his arm in a relaxed manner, indicating that he was giving it to Han Li.

It seemed these old eccentrics valued Han Li far more now that he was one step closer to entering the inner halls, having rushed through the Paths of Ice and Fire. However, Wu Chou gazed at him from the side with increasing hostility, occasionally revealing a malicious glint from his eyes.

Zenith Yin seemed to have noticed this and suddenly glared at Wu Chou, transmitting a few words to him. Wu Chou suddenly lowered his head, and his expression had returned to normal after he raised his head again.

While Han Li dealt with Zenith Yin and the other eccentrics, he thought about whether or not he should contact the Bone Sage. It appeared that the old eccentrics didn't have a concrete plan in mind. Could it be that they were planning on responding based on how events would unfold?

As Han Li thought about this, the final moments of the Path of Ice and Fire had passed. The transportation formation at the center of the stone hall disappeared without a trace. There were only about a dozen people in the room before it disappeared.

At that same moment, the walls around them began to rumble. The stone doors then opened by themselves to reveal long, narrow limestone passages.

“Three of these four passageways lead to their own pavilion, each separately holding ancient treasures, medicine pills, and cultivation arts left behind by ancient cultivators. However, all of those items are sealed and each person may only pick one item. After the item is chosen, that person will immediately teleport to the next trial, the Boundary of Fantastical Illusion. As for the last passage, it will teleport those immediately to the next trial. Whoever walks that path can only accept their bad luck for having passed the previous trial without reward. The restrictions here are a bit strange. The passage they lead to changes with each occurrence. But if one chooses a passage, they will have no option to withdraw. If there is anyone who doesn’t wish to attempt the Boundary of Fantastical Illusion, so long as you stay in this stone room for the day, you will be teleported back to Heavenvoid Hall. I wish the best for all of you!” Upon seeing the passages appear, the kindly faced elder slowly gave the explanation as he remained seated with legs crossed.

When the others heard him, they indifferently glanced at him before ignoring him.

When the Star Palace elder saw this, he didn’t seem to care and

closed his his eyes with a smile.

Chapter 468: Treasure Light Pavilion

The cultivators that managed to arrive here were all unwilling to return empty handed after having braved those previous dangers. As such, there wasn't much discussion to be had. A few of them even walked towards the stone passageways without a word. After a short moment they silently disappeared into the passageways. One by one, they gradually left the room.

After seeing Wan Tianming's party enter a passage, the Devil Dao eccentrics coldly glanced at each other and displayed no haste to enter a passageway. As for Grandmaster Zenith Yin, he coldly looked at the two white clothed elders that were still sitting in meditation. After some hesitation, he pulled out a sparkling bright bracelet made of four thumb-sized beads that released faint azure light.

"This is the Matron Screen Pearl. It possesses the wondrous effects of steadying the mind and protecting the soul. With these beads, you will be able to keep your mind clear, even if the dangers of the Boundary of Fantastical Illusion increased by several fold." After this was said, Zenith Yin handed the bracelet over to Han Li.

Han Li was delighted and accepted the bracelet while repeatedly saying thanks.

He had long since heard of the renowned Matron Screen Pearls. It was said that with a single pearl in your possession, one was far less likely to be interfered with by their inner demons during cultivation. Han Li found it truly surprising for Zenith to magnanimously give him a bracelet that strung these four of these

grand treasures in order for him to make it through the last trial.

From Zenith Yin's reluctant and hesitant appearance, Han Li reckoned that since it would be embarrassing to immediately reclaim it, Zenith Yin would be certain to take it back after the treasure hunt when there was no longer anything to be gained.

However, there were many sinister designs lurking inside Heavenvoid Hall. Even a Nascent Soul cultivator such as Grandmaster Zenith Yin was being secretly plotted against by the Bone Sage. Han Li had strong doubts about whether or not his in-name master would be able to leave Heavenvoid Hall alive.

Han Li wore the bracelet in front of Zenith Yin and carefully examined it.

The Matron Screen Pearls appeared to be made of wood and gold yet they weren't. They also carried a heavy fragrance similar to that of sandalwood. When one smelled it, their mind grew clear and their spirits were roused. As expected, it was outstanding!

"It is reasonable to say that these Matron Screen Pearls should be enough to keep you safe. But to make sure of your safety, Young Friend Han should carry this as well. This is a treasure talisman that I refined from my Nightazure Needle, but its power is several times stronger than common magic treasures. Please use it to protect yourself." The Confucian-robed old man took out an azure talisman and handed it over to Han Li with a smile."

"A treasure talisman of the Nightazure Needle?" Han Li was

initially stunned when he heard this but he soon grew excited. This was a treasure talisman from a Nascent Soul cultivator, fundamentally incomparable to common trash treasure talismans.

Although the Divine Devilbane Lightning from his Bamboo Cloudswarm swords was formidable, he couldn't use it at every turn. With this item, his safety would be greatly increased.

Han Li took the item without any refusals and respectfully said his thanks.

At that moment, Man Huzi wordlessly took out a piece of black armor. It was covered in silver Qilin scales and appeared quite heavy.

When Zenith Yin saw this, his heart was moved and an expression of greed momentarily appeared on his face. He hastily said, "Brother Man is quite magnanimous, to give this distinguished treasure for the survival of my junior disciple. I, his master, and my junior disciple heavily thank you!"

Man Huzi glanced at Han Li and said with a malicious expression, "I acquired this treasured armor over a hundred years ago, and it still proves useful to me. But as my Heavenbearing Devil Arts have already reached the great success stage, I'll lend this item to the youngster for protection. When the time comes, you had better not disappointment me, or else... hehe..."

Han Li was incapable of keeping his calm appearance after hearing him.

Zenith Yin appeared disappointed for a second when he heard the armor was only being lended but he soon wore a smile, saying, “Good! With these treasures, my junior disciple will surely remain safe regardless of what dangers he encounters. Let us go take our treasures. The passageways won’t remain open forever.”

Man Huzi and Layman Qing Yi had no objections to this, but they didn’t move to leave. Instead, they first took a deep look at Han Li.

Han Li was startled for a moment before bitterly smiling. It appeared they were fearful that he would turn back from fear, so they would watch him go through a passageway first instead.

As a result, Han Li walked into a passageway with a slight smile. Soon after, the three Devil Dao cultivators looked at each other with a smile, each walking into one of the three other passageways.

When the two white clothed old men were the only ones remaining in the stone hall, the harsh faced old man slowly spoke without opening his eyes, “Don’t you think the Devil Dao cultivators’ actions are a bit strange?” His tone felt slightly sinister.

The kindly faced old man frowned and agreed, “Although those old eccentrics used methods to interfere with our prying, it appeared from their expressions that they heavily value that early Core Formation cultivator youngster. Moreover, they even gave him several items for protection.”

After this exchange, silence resumed.

The harsh-faced old man asked with a grave expression, "What do you think?"

"The only things those old eccentrics value are benefits! And the only thing that would move them so would be the Heavenvoid Cauldron in the Inner Halls. That Core Formation youngster should be able to assist them in seizing the treasure!" The kindly-faced old man hesitantly replied.

Had Han Li heard them, he would've been speechless. These two were truly cunning. With only a few sparse words, they managed to nearly guess the truth. This would've resulted in both Han Li's fear and respect were he there.

"Seize the Heavenvoid Cauldron? They still daydream of this? Unless one possesses those spirit beasts long extinct from the Scattered Star Seas, any attempt would be made in vain. Otherwise, the Master Heavenly Star Sages would've seized it several generations ago!" The harsh-faced old man spoke with disdain.

"That could be the case! Perhaps there were some ambitious individuals who entered the wilderness, spending the time and effort for the sliver of a chance. After all, in the last occurrence of Heavenvoid Hall, the Heavenvoid Cauldron had nearly been seized. Although that person managed to barely open the lid at the last moment and had their Heavenmend Pill seized by others, Wan Tianming's Gold Threaded Silkworm does have a chance."

“Since its like that, we had best secretly follow them just in case. It would be best if they don’t acquire it. If they truly managed to acquire the treasure, we cannot allow the Heavenmend Pills to fall into their hands.”

“Of course!”

Han Li didn’t know that he had roused the attention of the two Star Palace enforcement elders. As of current, he was climbing up spiraling limestone stairs with an expression of amazement.

Not long after he had entered the passageway, he was met with an unending spiraling stone stairway. He still hadn’t reached the end even after walking for the time it took to finish a meal.

Han Li’s curiosity grew stronger. Just how far up did this place reach?

Calming the doubts in his heart, Han Li continued to calmly climb up the stairway.

After climbing up another four hundred meters, Han Li caught sight of a gleam of light. With newly roused spirits, he hastened his steps and eventually arrived at an exit.

Han Li’s heart stirred when he saw a faint glimpse of what lay past the exit. He hastily strided through.

He arrived underneath a gloomy, dark yellow sky. It was filled with grey clouds and lacked a sun. It was an unfathomably huge cylindrical world. Its area reached about four thousand meters. At first glance, it appeared rather narrow as the world's borders were lined with thick fog walls that couldn't be seen though.

He stood at an opening of the fog wall where a forty meter long bridge of white jade was floating in the air. The bridge was exquisite and was engraved with dragons and phoenixes. It led to a rectangular pavilion that floated at the center of the area.

The two story pavilion was over a hundred meters tall and was constructed entirely out of jade. It shone from the air as if it were a palace from the afterlife. A golden signboard hung from its entrance with the words "Treasure Light Pavilion" written in an ancient script.

Han Li didn't hastily set foot on the bridge and carefully examined the pavilion.

Although the pavilion wasn't large, unfathomably deep spiritual Qi fluctuations emitted from within, and a layer of white fluorescent enveloped the building. It appeared that an extremely formidable spell formation was set up there.

Han Li eventually started to move, slowly treading across the jade bridge and towards the Treasure Light Pavilion.

When Han Li reached the halfway point, he couldn't help but take a glance below the bridge. The endless, black abyss that

entered his view left his heart ice cold!

Chapter 469: Acquiring Treasure

While Han Li was normally steadfast, this sight caused his mind to sway, leaving him in a daze. After forcing himself to look deeper and ignore his feelings of discomfort, he turned away without gaining anything. Despite having immense spiritual sense, he was unable to figure out anything about the abyss.

Afterwards, Han Li continued on his way without hesitation.

Once he grew closer to the pavilion, its true size was revealed, appearing at least four times as large as common buildings. Its entrance was an arched door that was six meters tall and was covered in a screen of yellow light.

After Han Li arrived at the front, he examined the light screen and tilted his head in thought. With a flash of azure light, his hand was covered in swordlight. He lightly touched the light screen with his finger. The light screen rippled, but it allowed the swordlight in without the slightest resistance.

Han Li felt slightly surprised by this. He then withdrew the azure swordlight and inserted his arm into the yellow light. It felt slightly cold as if his arm were surrounded by water.

Without any further hesitation, Han Li stepped forward, disappearing into the light barrier.

But after he entered the arched doors, Han Li stood in place with a look of astonishment.

He saw rows of round white jade tables about a meter tall, each of differing sizes. Their surfaces were covered in flickering light barriers of all colors as if they were concealing something underneath.

Han Li's gaze focused, revealing at race of excitement.

When Han Li first saw the words "Treasure Light Pavilion, he had already guessed that he had come across great fortune. This pavilion most likely contained ancient treasures. However, it appeared that the pavilion was desolate. It seemed all the people that had arrived here either went to the second floor or had already chosen an ancient treasure and moved on.

With that thought, Han Li examined the jade tables. As he had expected, there were jade tables that lacked both an item and the light barrier.

'And the stairs to the second floor?' Han Li was slightly puzzled. He swept his gaze all around and couldn't find it! After looking around several times with great interest, Han Li spotted a particularly unusual jade table.

This jade table was at the back of the first floor and appeared alone. It was extremely smooth and was engraved with profound, cryptic talisman markings.

Han Li examined it several times and drew from his own knowledge of spell formations to conclude it was a simple

transportation formation with peculiar shape. He then slowly walked past the rows of jade tables and gazed at the ancient treasures they contained.

After looking at them, Han Li frowned. “Aren’t these ancient treasures a bit too lacking?”

After looking at several tens of jade tables, Han Li completely lost his interest. He stood in place, muttering to himself with crossed arms and a doubtful expression.

The items on the jade tables were unworthy of the name of “ancient treasures”. They were all either spears or halberds of an ancient style. Although they all flashed with various colored ancient Qi, Han Li clearly understood that these items were the near equivalent of flying swords and saber magic treasures that were used in the present. Their abilities wouldn’t be particularly exceptional.

Of course, they couldn’t be said to be useless! But with the Bamboo Cloudswarm Swords in his possession, the items on this floor held little interest to him. He wanted ancient treasures that had extraordinary abilities like his flower basket.

Although he thought this, he forced himself to look through all the items on the floor in fear that he would miss something. As a result, Han Li sighed and walked to the transportation formation without further hesitation. He believed that the items of the second floor should prove different.

After placing several spirit stones on the transportation formation, Han Li arrived at a new location with a flash of white light.

‘This was the second floor of the Treasure Light Pavilion?’ Han Li looked ahead of him with squinted eyes and tight lips.

The room wasn’t large. Apart from a huge spherical light barrier in front of him, there was nothing else in the room. The light barrier was about forty meters tall and floated about three meters above the center of the room, shining with a soft azure radiance. Several tens of different ancient treasure calmly floated within.

There were scrolls, jade tiles, alm bowls, and black banners as well as many other items that Han Li hadn’t seen before. There were no duplicate items to speak of.

When Han Li saw this, he was delighted and knew he had come to the right place.

However, these items were so openly on display. If they were so easily taken, they wouldn’t still be there by the time he arrived.

With that thought, Han Li slowly walked towards the sphere of light with his hands behind his back. After quickly circling around it several times, he stopped and opened his mouth, spitting out an inch-long azure sword.

It spiraled above his head many times before it struck at the

bottom of light barrier as a streak of azure light.

Peng. A flicker of blue light sparked from where the swordlight attempted to pierce the light barrier. The swordlight was then immediately repelled, leaving no mark behind.

Han Li wasn't particularly surprised by this. This merely displayed how valuable the ancient treasures were.

With an excited expression, Han Li opened his mouth and spouted out eight more small swords. The nine swords released a long shriek above him and combined into a huge azure sword.

“Strike!” Han Li softly shouted.

The huge sword struck the light barrier with mountain breaking momentum. Boom. In the instant the huge sword touched the barrier, a meter large hole appeared.

Han Li revealed a trace of happiness, but before he could move, a huge force suddenly blew away the huge sword from the light barrier. With a flash of blue light, the light barrier returned to normal.

Han Li was astonished. He then reexamined the sphere of light with a gloomy expression and with his chin in hand.

Not long after, Han Li's expression relaxed and he faintly smiled. He pointed towards the huge sword, causing it to disassemble back

into nine small swords with a clear ring. Having returned them into his body, he reached towards his waist and took out the Gold Devouring Beetles' spirit beast pouches without the slightest hesitation.

With a loud buzz, the gold and silver insect swarm flocked out from the pouches. Han Li whistled in a low tone, causing the insect swarm to charge towards the sphere of light. In an instant, the insects had covered the bottom of the light barrier. In mere moments, the insect swarm forcibly gnawed out a meter large hole from the light barrier.

Blue light flourished from the light barrier, causing the round hole to distort and shrink. The barrier was recovering at greater speed than the Gold Devouring Beetles could destroy.

When Han Li saw this, he didn't dare to delay. He immediately turned into streak of slender azure light and quickly flew into the hole just before it closed.

The azure light faded away inside the light barrier to reveal Han Li.

He gently floated amongst the many ancient treasures inside the light sphere. Their ancient aura caused him to feel somewhat excited. However, Han Li didn't dare to wait too long and hastily released his spiritual sense in an attempt to probe the intensity of the ancient treasures' spiritual Qi. He soon wore a bitter expression. His spiritual sense was actually unable to leave his body inside the barrier. As such, he would only be able to rely on experience and intuition to choose a treasure.

Without any other choice, Han Li could only glare at the items with widened eyes.

‘The strange blade? No, it was clearly an offensive ancient treasure. Those weren’t rare.’

‘The command medallion? No, it was engraved with the image of a strange beast. It should be the same as the scroll painting of the Congealed Yang Birds and contain the souls of spirit beasts.’

‘The snare drum? What’s this? I can’t make out its use. Let’s forget about it.’

One by one, Han Li eliminated the ancient treasures he wouldn’t choose. Eventually, Han Li narrowed his selection to three items: a gold oval mirror, a chain of five different-colored copper bands, and a wide dark-red cloak.

Han Li naturally had his own reasons for why he had picked them. Needless to say for the golden mirror, mirrors-type magic treasures each possessed unique and remarkable abilities. Han Li didn’t wish to pass on such a powerful treasure.

As for the chain of five different-colored copper bands, they simultaneously contained the five elements. Although he didn’t know its ability, he knew it couldn’t possibly be weak.

And for the cloak...

Chapter 470: Strange Black Armor

Han Li's gaze focused on the black cloak the longest out of the three treasures.

This cloak's appearance was very peculiar, consisting of two layers. The interior was made of silver thread, and the exterior was made of the feathers of an unknown bird. The feathers emitted a fluctuating dark-red blood light from within the light barrier, appearing rather bizarre.

This was also the first time Han Li saw this type of magic treasure, and he was very curious about its abilities. Han Li guessed that this ancient treasure had either defensive or stealth properties. Both of these were something that Han Li direly needed if he wanted to survive the countless powerful enemies inside the Inner Hall.

Han Li appeared hesitant as he gazed at the three magic treasures. As soon as he picked an item, he would be teleported out of the building. He had to pick carefully.

It was reasonable to say that the golden mirror was the safest choice. Han Li was almost certain that it held significant power and would prove to provide an immediate and great increase to his strength. As for the odd five-colored copper bands, they could prove to surprise him. Their synergistic properties and multi-colored brilliance caused it to appear rather mysterious. As for the cloak, there was a good chance that it would also be immediately useful. Perhaps it could save his life during a moment of danger.

Han Li's focus continuously changed between the three items.

Although he would normally be happy about being able to acquire such powerful treasures with ease, he was worried about what would be gained or lost from choosing one over the other. A while later, Han Li took a deep breath and grew calm.

He muttered to himself for a moment more before a spirited light flashed from his eyes as wild imagination unfolded in his mind. These unexpected thoughts caused Han Li's heart to become restless.

According to Han Li's knowledge of formation spells and restrictions, the room's high grade involuntary teleportation restrictions couldn't be tricked or worked around apart from finding the central crux of the formation or forcefully erasing the restriction from the entire room. Once someone was caught in the restrictions, they would be automatically teleported out.

Both of those options were out of reach for Han Li. Finding the central crux of the room's restrictions was something that would take a grandmaster level formation expert several years to accomplish. The very thought of it was something best left alone. As for forcefully erasing the formation, it was only something that Han Li would attempt if he were out of his mind. Given the many Nascent Soul eccentrics that clearly hadn't succeeded, he would have to be deluded to think that a Core Formation cultivator like himself could succeed.

However, he did possess the formation breaking insights of the genius spell formation master Xin Ruyin. Her records described a

theoretical response to area restrictions that could disable an area's restrictions temporarily. Although it was only for a short instant, it would give Han Li enough time to acquire an extra ancient treasure.

This method required the cultivator's own spiritual power to be completely severed from the energy contained room, leaving not the slightest connection for the duration.

After Xin Ruyin wrote this in her records, she self-mockingly added that even a Nascent Soul cultivator couldn't perform such a feat; the thought was but an indulgence moment of her imagination. If a cultivator truly had such amazing abilities, they wouldn't have to go through the trouble of this as they could rely on their own strength to forcibly break through the formations.

After all, the cultivators of this world were only at most capable of Qi concealment techniques that could hide themselves from others. How could they possibly sever their own connection from the spiritual Qi of heaven and earth?

But when Han Li read this inside his cave residence, he immediately thought of his Gold Devouring Beetle's bizarre capability of devouring the energies of Heaven and Earth. This roused enough interest in him to perform a small test with his Gold Devouring Beetles. He had spent a short amount of time on it and regarded it as a momentary diversion to be later forgotten. But now that he recalled all of this, Han Li couldn't suppress his burning excitement.

After a moment of careful consideration, Han Li felt that this had

a large chance of success. Even if it failed, he'd still be able to acquire one ancient treasure and would suffer no loss.

With that thought, Han Li no longer hesitated. He waved his two arms and brought forth the spirit beast pouches on his body. Several tens of thousands of Gold Devouring Beetles flew off, transforming into a huge, buzzing cloud of insects that spiralled around Han Li.

Han Li paid no attention to the insect swarm and turned his gaze towards the three ancient treasures. After some more thought, he floated over to the dark red cloak with his insect swarm closely following after him.

When Han Li was about three meters away from the cloak, Han Li felt a slight change in the surrounding spiritual Qi. He hastily stopped and wore a solemn expression.

His hands suddenly formed an incantation seal, and used a series of whistles. The Gold Devouring Beetles that were surrounding Han Li suddenly became restless, and they charged towards Han Li like an arrow. In the blink of an eye, they were covering his entire body in dense folds, immersing him in a sea of silver.

While Han Li was covered in the beetles, his whistles did not cease, but rather, they became even sharper.

Not long after, the beetles on his body started releasing soft cries, echoing Han Li's whistles. The beetles' cries gradually became louder until their mouths were gaping wide. Their continuous

breathes appeared synchronized to a bizarre degree.

At that moment, Han Li halted his whistling and became silent. An incredible scene followed.

The cries of the insects crawling over Han Li's body diverged into high and low, gradually bringing forth specks of black light. As more flickering specks of light appeared, they grew larger. When they eventually touched, they fused together, becoming larger blots of black light. These black blots gradually grew larger and more numerous until they formed a large sphere.

The black sphere appeared like a blooming chrysanthemum. The flower-like sphere slowly blossomed and unfolded as the black light underneath continuously grew larger, forming a profoundly black armor underneath. This impenetrable armor covered both Han Li and the beetles.

The beetles' cries immediately disappeared with the appearance of the armor. Apart from pitch-black, nothing else could be seen from the armor. It was unknown whether it was simply incapable of being seen or was completely void of color.

In that very instant, Han Li began to move. A strange hand of jet-black light moved to snatch the nearby cloak at the speed of lightning. At the same time, Han Li clumsily turned around and floated towards the five colored bands.

In the same instant Han Li grabbed the cloak, he was surrounded in brilliant blue light. The countless rays of light swept over him,

but after they touched the strange black armor, they immediately disappeared into the black light without a trace. However, this didn't cause the blue light to retract. Instead, it grew increasingly overbearing and attempted to violently suppress the black armor with all its strength, causing it to sway on the verge of collapse.

Han Li was burning with impatience, but his movements still remained careful and smooth, for fear that he would disturb something else.

Traveling a mere twenty meters, Han Li felt as if he had made a difficult trek for two hours before having finally arrived in front of the five colored copper bands. While forcefully suppressing his wild delight, Han Li swiftly grabbed the bands with his hand of black light.

At nearly the same time his hand closed around the copper bands, Han Li's black armor was overwhelmed by the blue light, causing it to loudly shatter. The armor dissolved into little blots before completely disappearing.

Before Han Li could even react, he was drawn into the blue light and the world changed around him, causing him to disappear without a trace.

In a flash of blinding blue light, Han Li appeared in a small stone room. After swaying a few times, he managed to find his bearings and stand straight before carefully examining his surroundings. He immediately let out a sigh of relief. Fortunately, there wasn't a single person around. Otherwise, they would have caught the extremely abnormal sight of him being covered in layers of

crawling beetles.

Having finished pondering, Han Li whistled. In response, the Gold Devouring Beetles flew off of his body and into a sparkling gold-silver cloud above his head.

Without paying them much mind, Han Li hastily looked at the two items in his hands. Although he had previously seen them many times, Han Li could not hold back the thrill from having the items in his hands.

He gently stroked each of the two ancient treasures for a moment. The cloak was extremely light and emitted a bit of heat. As for the five copper bands, they were ice-cold to the touch.

After admiring the two treasures for some time, his attention shifted to the stone room.

It was completely empty apart from the transportation formation that brought him here and a rectangular passageway that appeared completely desolate. There was nothing else of interest in the room.

Chapter 471: An Odd Treasure

There was no question as to whether or not this passageway led to the Boundary of Fantastical Illusion. With his cultivation of the Great Development Technique along with the Matron Screen Beads that Zenith Yin lent him, passing through this trial should be a matter of ease.

With that thought, Han Li turned his attention to carefully examining the two ancient treasures in his hands. If he couldn't fully understand the scope of their power, he wouldn't be able to effectively use them when the time came.

With a flash of blood-red light, the cloak disappeared from his hand, leaving only the chain of five copper bands in his other hand. These five copper bands were about as wide as an ordinary arm and had mysterious talisman markings engraved on their surface, causing them to appear mystifying.

Han Li lightly shook them with a wave of his wrist. The colorful glow of the copper bands continuously fluctuated in response and released the faint cry of a phoenix. A flicker of spirit appeared from Han Li's eyes as he lowered his head in thought. He then slowly poured spiritual power into the copper bands through his fingers.

During this, Han Li solemnly gazed at the bands without blinking. Then with a flash of colorful light, the chain of five bands abruptly disappeared without a trace.

Han Li was startled, but something soon came to mind. He

looked upward to see the five copper bands floating not far above his head. They were ceaselessly flickering with demonic light.

Han Li frowned and raised his arm, sending out an azure incantation seal. The copper bands immediately twirled for a moment before striking the wall to the side. With several muffled pings, the wall flashed with white light, revealing not the slightest damage. The copper bands had instead been pushed far away.

It seemed the copper bands were not intended to be used to directly attack.

Han Li's expression remained unchanged. He waved his arm and had the copper bands fly back above his head. Then without any hesitation, he spouted out a breath of spiritual Qi towards the rings, causing them to swell into a huge size in the blink of an eye. Blinding radiance coiled around the bands, and their talisman markings began to move.

Ring-type magic tools weren't ordinarily used to make direct attacks. A majority of them were used to either trap the enemy or defend one's self, something that Han Li had learned through experience.

After looking at the huge bands and the astonishing pressure they radiated, Han Li lifted his head and slowly uttered the word, "Execute."

Immediately after he spoke, the huge bands released a cry and directly fell down onto him. The rings overlapped one another and

covered Han Li within them. Afterwards, the huge bands revolved around him with increasing speed, completely covering Han Li in a blurred screen of rainbow light.

Han Li wore a slight smile. It seemed the copper bands possessed defensive abilities. As for how effective they were, that was something that could only be tested during an enemy confrontation. With that thought, Han Li shot an incantation seal towards the light screen with a flick of his finger. In an instant, the light curtain dissolved and the rings returned to their original appearance.

But after a period of violent swaying, the copper rings released a flash of brilliance and disappeared from sight.

This time, Han Li remained calm as he extended his palm. Following a flash of rainbow light, the five palm-sized copper bands appeared in his hand.

Han Li calmly gazed at the copper bands with a pensive expression as if something had come to mind.

Not long after, Han Li chanted a series of cryptic incantations, causing the bands to disappear from his hand. But after only a second, they appeared around Han Li's limbs and neck in a flourish of light.

Han Li's stance grew unsteady as he began to drop down like a log. Fortunately, he had already prepared for this and hastily muttered an incantation to release the copper rings.

Han Li hastily recovered his balance and rubbed his choked neck. However, his eyes betrayed immense excitement.

This magic treasure could be used as a sneak attack, and was something that was impossible to defend against. Even if his opponents had immense spiritual sense and realized something was amiss with the copper rings before they were restrained, they still wouldn't have time to react. Han Li was confident that even Nascent Soul cultivators couldn't guard against them. He reckoned that the odds of success for an ambush were quite large. Of course, he still had no way of knowing how long the bands would be able to restrain his opponents.

Han Li was delighted to find that the copper bands abilities went far beyond his original expectations. Feeling completely content, Han Li placed the copper bands in his storage pouch, and he took out the dark-red cloak.

Tests for this ancient treasure were naturally much simpler. He simply wore the cloak on his body and poured a bit of magic power into it. It brightly flourished with a blood light and caused Han Li to feel a burning sensation on his body. At that same time, his magic power began to wildly flow into the cloak beyond his control.

Han Li was greatly frightened and hastily severed his magic power towards the cloak, causing its brilliance to immediately dim.

Han Li was startled and took off the cloak. He looked through it

once more with squinted eyes. After a short moment, he donned it again and began to gradually pour spiritual power into the cape with great care.

Once again, magic power began to rush out from his body, but this time, Han Li was prepared and remained calm. Instead, he turned his eyes to the cloak and carefully examined it for any oddities. In that moment, the cloak's outer layer of feathers grew longer and blood-red, covering Han Li in a dense barrier of blood light.

After staring at it for a moment, Han Li waved his arms and slowly hovered off the ground. He then gazed around himself for a moment, before disappearing without a trace.

A series of muffled bangs soon followed, and a ball of blood light burst from the right wall. Han Li fell from the ruptured light and tumbled several times, nearly falling onto his behind.

His face was filled with shock! He hadn't even used its full strength and only utilized the most common flying technique. However, this had caused Han Li to abruptly crash into the wall, much to his dismay!

With disbelief, Han Li attempted to use several other movement techniques, but the results were all the same. He would ram into a wall and end up disoriented without making any progress on controlling the cloak's abilities. It seemed this treasure allowed him to use this astonishing speed without any option of going slower.

Han Li silently stood in place with complete astonishment. This cloak was far too bizarre. This was undoubtedly a top-grade life-preserving treasure given its light-like speed. Han Li was confident that even if a Nascent Soul cultivator were to chase him, they would lose his trail after only a short moment with this amazing treasure.

But at the same time, this cloak had significant flaws. Not to mention the astonishing expenditure of magic power, it's speed completely uncontrollable, much to Han Li's disappointment.

It was clear that this top-grade ancient treasure was flawed and limited. Why else would it appear in the outer halls? But despite this, this item was still immensely useful in fleeing from enemies.

Han Li put away the cloak with complicated feelings. He then lowered his head in bitter laughter before sitting cross-legged on the floor to refine Qi. As the cloak had consumed quite a bit of magic power in such a short time, he couldn't afford to just walk out of the room in his current condition.

Han Li rested for over half a day, and when he had nearly replenished his spent magic power, Han Li opened his eyes and stood up as he solemnly gazed into the passageway.

With the bracelet of Matron Screen Beads in one hand and his Great Development Technique circulating throughout his body, he slowly walked into the passageway.

Upon entering, Han Li discovered that the passageway was quite short. After turning a corner, he had arrived at its end.

Light flashed before his eyes, fading away to reveal an outdoor corridor. The corridor was magnificent and refined, but at a glance, it appeared to be endless. It was unknown just how far it reached. White clouds and divine melodies flowed in from outside the corridor along with the faint image of a lustrous jade pavilion.

When Han Li saw this, a faint sneer appeared on his face as he walked onto the promenade with long strides.

Just as he set foot on it, Han Li circulated magic power throughout his body. According to what he knew, this one was like the other trials: flying techniques could not be used and one could only travel by foot.

Han Li wasn't bothered by this and intensely studied the area outside the corridor. The divine melodies became clearer after entering the corridor.

Han Li attentively listened to the so-called divine melodies with a blank face. Not long after, he unconsciously wore a mocking expression on his face.

Han Li walked without the slightest urgency as if he were taking a stroll in his own garden. However, the further he walked down the corridor, the more beautiful and clear the melodies became. At that same time, extremely graceful cranes began to appear from within the white clouds. Their elegant dancing along with the cries

they unleashed were extremely impressive.

Chapter 472: Black Palace

Han Li gave the cranes a mere glance before continuing along his way, paying no further attention to them.

But as Han Li continued on his path, the divine melodies descending from the sky gradually increased in intensity. The white cranes that had been dancing in the air abruptly flew to both sides of the corridor and spread their wings with a long cry.

A short moment later, amidst the divine melodies, the cranes spun several times before transforming into young women in palace dresses.

These young women appeared to be only eighteen years of age and were astoundingly beautiful and full of youthful vigor. They smiled towards Han Li with bright eyes that were filled with affection as if he were their beloved sweetheart and then swung their slender waists with a flexibility that made them appear boneless.

At that moment, the divine sounds changed, becoming soft and tender like the caress of a lover. The very air was filled with the sensation of passionate romance, unwillingly bringing forth emotion within even those who have long buried them deep within their hearts.

When Han Li heard these new sounds, his expression changed for a moment before he immediately steeled his heart and continued on his way, pointedly ignoring the the sweet nothings whispered

by the young women.

After walking about a hundred meters, Han Li heard a sudden change in tone causing the melodies to contain feelings of grief and sadness.

The young women's expressions transformed with the melodies, and their dancing halted. Each of their faces held immense sadness as they gazed at Han Li with extreme grief, as if he were a heartbreaking ingrate. Anyone who gazed upon the women would feel immense heartache and compassionate affection.

“Interesting!” Han Li smiled and walked from side to side, appreciating the saddened expressions of the young women as if he were watching an interesting play.

Han Li clearly understood that since the Boundary of Fantastical Illusion followed after the Paths of Ice and Fire, there were certain to be more than these mere tricks.

As expected, after seeing that this was unable to stop Han Li, the divine melodies shifted to subtly invoke lust. At that same moment, the young women aged by several years with a flash of light, each of them now appearing as curvaceous beauties in their prime.

With flushed complexions, the peerless beauties' eyes fluttered with enticing passion as they took off their muslin dresses. Along with the seductive moans leaving their small red mouths and the demonic lust-provoking sounds being emitted by the sky, it was

more than enough to drive any man mad with temptation.

Han Li was stunned. But after circulating the Great Development Technique once through his body, he immediately regained his calm.

Even if a master of bewitchment techniques were to assault Han Li with full force as he was now, Han Li wouldn't be fazed in the slightest. In comparison to such an event, these crude illusions were beneath his notice.

As Han Li walked through the two rows of gorgeous women, their actions became even more unrestrained. A few of them looked to Han Li with flirtatious glances as they pressed their hands against their chest. Others stroked their entire body as they shook their hips, along with other increasingly lewd acts.

Han Li watched on with dazzled eyes and clicked his tongue. While he remained unfazed due to the protection of the Great Development Technique, he still made sure to properly appreciate such a rare view.

Following this, the women's appearances changed once more, transforming into all sorts of different types of beauties. There were dignified and scholarly noblewomen, fiery whores, pure-hearted maidens, and elegant and icy matrons, each with their own different bearings and mannerisms. The scene that was revealed was much like a gathering of all the peerless beauties of the mortal world.

A faint smile hung on Han Li's face, but his gaze was ice-cold, without the slightest hint of desire.

After two hours at a relaxed pace, Han Li had finally arrived at the end of the corridor after taking his time and feasting the view.

The corridor led to a black palace hall with a flat ceiling. The large gates and its walls were constructed entirely out of black bricks.

The hall's gates appeared over forty meters tall. As for the interior of the hall, it was pitch-black, eliciting a feeling of mystery.

At the same time that Han Li caught sight of the large black palace hall, the overbearing melodies from the sky and the seductive women suddenly disappeared. All that remained were the endless white clouds. The corridor's appearance had returned to how it was when he had just entered.

Han Li didn't appear surprised and just turned his gaze towards the black hall, wearing a solemn expression. He unconsciously slowed his steps as he approached, but before he grew near, a dense bloody scent arrived before him.

Han Li frowned and took another look at the palace hall.

He discovered that the palace hall wasn't actually purely black, but rather, it contained an odd shade of red as if a layer of hot

blood had been frozen over it, producing the wicked scent.

Han Li stood in front of the gates with crossed arms and muttered to himself for a moment.

Although he hadn't had someone explain the finer details of the Boundary of Fantastical Illusion, the mere appearance of this hall made him certain that this place tested the darkest fears of a person's mind. This undoubtedly wouldn't be as easy as the corridor had been.

Han Li fully understood that there were a few weaknesses present in his heart.

He was neither fearless nor unyielding. Nor was he a sage so wise that he was disconnected from the world. At most, he had been a clever and scheming mortal. It would be quite terrible if he saw something he was truly unable to endure and was forced to become still.

It seemed that he would finally have to rely on the assistance from the Matron Screen Beads to pass through this trial.

With that thought, Han Li stroked the beads on his wrist and steeled his mind before walking into the large hall.

It was beyond merely black!

Just as Han Li walked into the palace hall, he experienced an

immense feeling of discomfort.

Han Li was unable to detect any restrictions but could only see about ten meters ahead of him despite having his eyes wide open. He was also unable to extend his spiritual sense out from his body.

The absence of light was accompanied by a complete lack of sound, producing a stillness capable of inspiring dread.

Han Li unconsciously licked his lips and waved his hand, attempting to summon a ball of fire.

But at the same instant the flame appeared, it was immediately extinguished.

Han Li was lost in surprise for a moment before indignantly making another wave of his hand. This time, he had summoned a moonlight stone from his storage pouch.

But just like the flame, its light immediately faded away after appearing, turning completely dull as if it were an ordinary stone.

It was now that he realized the hall's restrictions must have the peculiar effect of absorbing light.

With his hopes of producing light dashed, he leisurely walked forwards.

But before he could even take a few steps, he suddenly heard sporadic and faint sobs of pain from the distance. It sounded as though they came from a young girl.

Han Li wryly smiled and continued forward, ignoring the sound.

However, the sobs erratically appeared from either close or far away, and they became increasingly sorrowful. The sobs seemed to be following him.

“Bah!” These sounds had caused him to become distraught and he couldn’t help but unleash a shout that caused the nearby ground to tremble.

The sobbing suddenly stopped.

Han Li felt greatly relieved and quickened his pace, wanting to leave this hall as soon as possible.

But after having only walked about ten meters, the sobbing continued. This time, a white silhouette had appeared not far in front of Han Li. A young woman wearing mourning clothes was crouched down .

The sorrowful sobs were apparently coming from her. Han Li’s face froze upon seeing the white-clothed woman. Strangely enough, despite the fact that she was kneeling and made no attempt to approach him, he hastily approached her instead.

He knew that the more timid and cowardly he acted in this place, the more likely he was to become entangled in its illusions. As avoiding any conflict wasn't possible, a calm confrontation seemed to be the optimal choice.

With that thought in mind, Han Li arrived about twenty meters from the white-clothed woman.

Just as Han Li thought to recklessly roar once more and disperse the woman, he suddenly felt that this woman's sobbing seemed familiar as if he had heard it before, long ago.

Han Li's heart trembled. He hastily reassured himself that this was but an illusion to prevent himself from becoming mesmerized. But the longer he gazed at her, the more familiar she seemed. His mind began to fervently shuffle through his memories, but he was unable to recall who she was.

Han Li unconsciously stopped and frowned, coldly gazing at the woman in front of him in silence.

"Fourth Brother!" The woman exclaimed with a timid, delicate voice.

When Han Li heard this, he felt his mind shudder as blood rushed to his head. He couldn't help but ask, "Who are you? Could you be...?"

"Fourth Brother, don't recognize me anymore? I'm your little

sister!” The white clothed woman slowly lifted her head from the ground and revealed her delicate, grieving face. Her small nose, bright eyes, and delicate face were reminiscent of his shy little sister from before he left for the Seven Mysteries Sect.

Chapter 473: Opening Of The Inner Halls

“Little sister?” Han Li’s gaze darted around as he studied the young woman. Her words and appearance had evoked something that he had long buried at the bottom of his heart.

“Fourth Brother, how did I get here? Didn’t I die from illness many years ago? I’m scared!” The white silhouette shivered as she stood. He could see that her complexion was pale as she grew near him, appearing just like small, terrified bird.

Han Li’s eyes revealed a strange expression.

This young woman who resembled his little sister was just two steps away from him.

Han Li’s eyes suddenly revealed a cold glint and he raised his hand, silently shooting out a small azure sword. In an instant, it pierced right through the young woman’s forehead.

The white silhouette released a tragic scream before turning into a puff of black smoke.

“Even if you take the form of my little sister, the two of us were separated when we were young. Not only should my current appearance greatly differ from long ago, but I imagine she had already forgotten my appearance as well. Just how could she have recognized her Fourth Brother at a glance?” Han Li looked in the direction of the fading black smoke and revealed a trace of loneliness.

With that finished, he brought his wrist up to his eyes and looked at the four Matron Screen Beads.

Although he had spoken those words with confidence, Han Li might not have taken action if the Matron Screen Pearls had not burned him when the white silhouette had approached him, dispelling the last trace of hesitation from the depths of his heart.

Although he knew it was only either an illusion or a transformed ghost, he had wanted to take a longer look at his sister's appearance.

Bearing a trace of indescribable sadness, Han Li continued forward through the darkness.

...

There were over ten people sitting motionlessly in front of an enormous pagoda. The pagoda appeared to reach the clouds and was constructed entirely out of huge limestone bricks.

From a distance, the pagoda appeared to be separated into five floors with each floor being slightly thinner than the one below it. However, each floor was separated by at least four hundred meters. Even the limestone gate at the very bottom was at least 200 meters tall, making for an astonishingly grand display.

The entire pagoda was covered by a white barrier of light with

everyone resting outside of it with their eyes shut. They appeared like ants compared to the white tower. A white transportation formation was setup at the center of the resting cultivators.

All of the Nascent Soul cultivators were amongst those resting in front of the pagoda. Apart from Wu Chou and the Bone Sage, there was also a late Core Formation cultivator there. Han Li, Yuan Yao, the two Star Palace Elders, and another late Core Formation cultivator had yet to appear.

Zenith Yin's face appeared calm as if he were without a care. However, he was inwardly anxious. As both were Core Formation cultivators, Han Li should've arrived here at the same speed Wu Chou had.

At that moment, a flash of white light appeared at the center of the transportation formation, revealing a silhouette.

Man Huzi and the other Devil Dao cultivators opened their eyes to see, but a moment of disappointment flashed from their eyes as it was the masked Yuan Yao who appeared.

When the woman saw so many Nascent Soul eccentrics simultaneously gaze at her, her heart dropped. But she soon forced herself to silently walk out of the formation as if nothing were wrong.

Coincidentally, just as the woman walked off the formation, it flashed once more to reveal Han Li.

Zenith Yin unconsciously smiled with raised eyebrows. Man Huzi and Layman Qing Yi silently glanced at each other, expressing their relief.

Just as Han Li appeared, he was surprised to find Yuan Yao in front of him.

After glancing at her with a slight smile, he walked towards Grandmaster Zenith Yin and saluted before standing behind him.

Zenith Yin was very pleased to see Han Li behave so dutifully to his 'revered master'. He turned his head and nodded to Han Li without saying anything else.

As expected, he wasn't about to embarrassingly raise the topic of having Han Li return the Matron Screen Pearls to him here.

Equivalently, Man Huzi didn't ask for his treasured armor back. It was as if these people had deliberately forgotten lending these treasures to Han Li.

When Han Li appeared, he saw that the cultivators were all sitting still without any intention to move as if they were waiting for something.

At that moment, Han Li discovered the huge pagoda in front of him and was greatly amazed.

'So this is the Inner Halls. It's very different from what I had

imagined.' Han Li inwardly muttered.

He then took a moment to shoot a stealthy glance at the Bone Sage.

He was near the back, sitting in earnest meditation. He didn't appear to notice Han Li's gaze.

The Bone Sage's voice suddenly arrived at Han Li's ear without warning, "Youngster, turn your sights elsewhere. Take care not to reveal me to my traitorous disciple. Rest assured, I've already made plans on how we will deal with Zenith Yin with complete confidence in success. However, the opportunity will only arise after you use the Bloodjade Spider to seize the Heavenvoid Cauldron. I will act after that! Remember, do not send me any voice transmissions. We can't expose the act!"

Han Li's expression remained calm as he listened, and then turned his gaze elsewhere.

'There will be an opportunity after seizing the treasure? What does he mean? Could it be that this old devil also wishes to acquire the Heavenvoid Cauldron?'

Han Li began to feel restless and suspicious!

As the Inner Halls was just about to open, he became worried about how events would unfold after the treasure was obtained. Regardless of whether or not he succeeded in obtaining the

Heavenvoid Cauldron, what happened afterwards would be anything but good for him.

As Han Li was inwardly pouring out his grievances, he heard a cold voice from his front, “The Inner Halls are about to open, and the two Star Palace fellows have yet to appear. It seems they won’t be muddying the waters. Wouldn’t you agree, Brother Man?” Wan Tianming, who sat at the center of the Righteous Dao cultivators, opened his glistening eyes. Staring at Man Huzi with concealed emotion, he slowly spoke while emitting an astonishing pressure from his body.

“Hehe! What, is Old Wan impatient? Let’s wait a bit. After all, those Star Palace fellows are rather crafty. Perhaps they will only appear when they expect us to have already fought amongst ourselves?” Man Huzi disdainfully smiled and lazily stroked his beard.

When Wan Tianming heard this, he appeared somewhat pensive, but he soon nodded his head and shut his eyes once more as if approving of Man Huzi’s words.

Two hours later, a series of violent tremors suddenly shook the ground.

The huge stone doors to the Inner Halls slowly opened to reveal a limestone passage.

Even at a distance, the passage appeared lofty and expansive.

At the same moment the gates opened, the transportation formation at the center faded from a dim light to nothing.

Man Huzi suddenly leapt up and threateningly grinned. Without waiting for Wan Tianming to speak, he fervently said, “Hehe! Good! Good! It seems those two Star Palace fellows won’t be stirring up any mischief. How about this, Wan Tianming? We’ll have a proper battle, and the loser’s party is barred from entering the Inner Halls.”

“No, I don’t wish to fight you. I have different plans.”

Contrary to everyone’s expectations, Wan Tianming gave a staunch refusal with a resolved expression.

Man Huzi was initially stunned before wearing a evil grin. He mockingly said, “Different plans? Could it be that you’re taking the initiative to admit defeat and withdraw without fighting?”

Wan Tianming shook his head and unhurriedly said, “Withdraw? Of course not! But, it would be ridiculous to fight without having even acquired the treasure. Would it not be better for our parties to take turns in attempting to acquire the treasure? Before this, we will restrain ourselves temporarily. As such, we can prevent a mutual struggle. After all, our current enemy is the Star Palace, not each other. We may appear brimming with confidence, but odds are that we will both be incapable of acquiring the treasure. In that case, there would have been no point to our battle.”

The Devil Dao cultivators were somewhat shocked

and couldn't help but exchange a glance with one another. They soon began moving their lips and sending voice transmissions.

Wan Tianming and the other Righteous Dao cultivators seemed to have already discussed this and were calmly waiting for the Devil Dao cultivators' response.

After a short moment, Zenith Yin spoke with a gloomy expression, "Your words are pleasant, but in the end, what will happen to the side that takes the treasure? If we were to succeed, how could we trust that you wouldn't then try seize it from us? Are your words merely the result of a silver tongue?"

Wan Tianming grinned in response and said without hesitation, "Zenith Yin, you're speaking nonsense. If you successfully acquire the treasure, then of course we will fight over it. Likewise, you'd contest us if we were to acquire it. When that time comes, we will rely on skill to decide. All in all, it's still better than potentially wasting our time fighting now!"

Chapter 474: [The Mantis And The Oriole](#)

When Zenith Yin heard Wan Tianming call his words nonsense, a sinister expression appeared on his face, but after hearing what Wan Tianming said after, he forcefully suppressed his fury. He then turned his head to Man Huzi and Layman Qi, and spoke to them in voice transmission.

Not longer after, their discussion was finished. Zenith Yin coldly said, “As per your esteemed suggestion, we will cease fighting for now. We will wait until after the treasure is seized.”

Wan Tianming chuckled, “Good! You’ve made a wise decision. Let us enter together.”

He then walked towards the huge limestone gate with Tian Wuzi and the old farmer closely following after him.

“Humph!” Man Huzi couldn’t help but snort at their grandiose mannerisms. His gaze then suddenly swept to Yuan Yao and the Core Formation cultivator that Han Li didn’t recognize with an ominous glint in his eyes.

At that same moment, the two paled at having become aware of Man Huzi’s malicious appearance. They both turned into a streak of yellow and red light, rushing towards the stone pagoda.

Man Huzi evilly grinned, “Where do you two think you’re going?”

He rubbed his hands and then waved them, shooting out two streaks of gold light in an instant, striking at them from behind.

The male cultivator in the yellow light released a miserable shriek before he tumbled to the ground. He was then swept up by the golden light and was split apart, scattering across the ground as a dismembered corpse.

As for when the golden light neared Yuan Yao's red light, several bursts of blinding green flames temporarily scattered the golden light. As if spurred on by this, her red light transformed into a scarlet-red bird and became even faster. Shooting past the golden light in a blur, she entered the stone pagoda's entrance and disappeared.

"Yi! That's odd." Layman Qing Yi softly said with a frown.

Layman Qing Yi and Zenith Yin didn't mind Man Huzi's actions, but upon seeing Yuan Yao escape Man Huzi's attack, they couldn't help but be surprised.

"Man Huzi, what is the meaning of this? Why did you attack the innocent?" Tian Wuzi turned around and spoke with an angry expression.

Man Huzi gave an uncaring glance at the old Daoist and callously said, "I wasn't in a good mood. What does it matter to you if I kill a few strangers? Could it be that you wish to take justice on their behalf or do you just wish to personally test my Heavenbearing

Devil Arts?”

“You...”

Without turning his head, Wan Tianming shouted, “Enough, Tian Wuzi! Those two aren’t members of the Righteous Dao. Leave them be! We have more important matters to attend to!”

Tian Wuzi could only hatefully glance at Man Huzi after hearing this and begrudgingly turn around.

Not long after, the Righteous Dao walked past the stone gate and entered the Inner Hall.

Zenith Yin glanced at the Righteous Dao cultivators as they left and applauded Man Huzi with a sinister smile, “Brother Man had done good in attacking them! We don’t want any annoying rats scurrying around us before the big event. Those two Core Formation cultivators actually wished to enter the Inner Hall and take advantage of the chaos for their own gain. How the living are so impatient. Still, there is still one person here who Brother Man still hadn’t killed.” Having said that, his gaze fell upon the Bone Sage.

The Bone Sage was completely calm and indifferent as if Zenith Yin was talking about someone else entirely.

Man Huzi expressionlessly said, “This person has somewhat of a connection with me. As he had done me a favor, it is natural that I

do not attack him. You two are also forbidden from disposing of him.”

Zenith Yin narrowed his eyes and carefully examined the Bone Sage, confirming whether or not he recognized this person. He then ambiguously said, “Since he is a junior with relation to Brother Man, it is only natural that we won’t dispose of him. Although, it is quite surprising that Brother Man would accept a favor from someone.”

Man Huzi’s face grew cold and he intensely glared at Zenith Yin, “Hehe! Zenith Yin, you dare to interrogate me?”

“How could I possibly? I was merely a bit curious! If Brother Man doesn’t wish to answer, then so be it. But, it seemed the black robed woman who escaped should have significant origins. Brother Man has best be careful!” Zenith Yin conceded the matter with a chuckle, but his last words seemed to carry some heavy meaning.

Man Huzi was silent for a moment before gloomily saying, “I am not blind. Did you think I didn’t see her use Old Devil Three Yang’s Azure Flamebursts? Apart from his most intimate disciples, no other disciples of the Azure Flame Sect could possibly acquire such an item. How else could that young woman possibly escape death?”

“Hehe, it seems I was mettling!” Seeing that Man Huzi’s expression was far from good, Zenith Yin tactfully said nothing else.”

“It is no matter. Even if that woman is important to Old Devil Three Yang, Brother Man has nothing to fear, given his cultivator. However, it is currently a crucial period of conflict in the Scattered Star Seas between the Star Palace and both the Righteous and Devil Daos. The Old Devil’s abilities are significant, and despite originating from the Devil Dao, he is personally unaligned to the sides of good and evil. As such, we had best avoid having this man become our enemy. Let’s quickly go after the girl!” The Confucian-robed old man smoothed the matter over from the side.

Man Huzi stiffly nodded his head and said no more. It was clear that he held great fear in his heart towards Old Devil Three Yang.

These many, newly unfolded events left Han Li with heavy, complicated feelings. All sorts of distracting thoughts began to appear in his mind.

A Core Formation cultivator was killed before him as easily as one would step on an ant, yet how did Yuan Yao had managed to flee such a fate?

Since when did the Bone Sage force a relationship between him and Man Huzi, one of the top figures among the Devil Dao? It was no wonder why he was so calm.

As for Yuan Yao, she seemed to have some sort of relationship with Old Devil Three Yang, someone who could inspire fear in a hegemon such as Man Huzi.

These thoughts simultaneously weaved through his mind and he

was unable to clearly arrange them for the time being.

He could only wordlessly pay attention to what Man Huzi and the others were saying in hopes he could gather some information that would allow him to form a dependable plan.

But unfortunately, Layman Qing Yi next words ended the conversation.

“Let’s quickly enter the Inner Hall! The Righteous Dao fellows won’t wait for us. We can’t let them stealthily leave us behind.” Layman Qing Yi glanced at the huge passage past the stone gate and wrinkled his brow.

Man Huzi glanced in the direction of the stone gate and sunk into thought for a moment before silently setting off.

Zenith Yin and Qing Yi glanced at each before following after them with relaxed expressions.

Han Li, Wu Chou, and the Bone Sage naturally followed after them.

Han Li and the others slowly entered the passage until they eventually disappeared from sight.

...

Three hours later, the darkened transportation formation suddenly shined with dazzling light, followed by the emergence of two silhouettes from the formation.

They were the Star Palace elders!

At that moment, the two were cautiously looking around. After they saw that no one was around, they wore a face of relief.

One of them spoke with a slight smile, “It appears that they’ve all entered. As cunning as these old eccentrics may be, they couldn’t imagine that our Star Palace had already unraveled this transportation restriction a thousand years ago. We can arrive at this place, anytime we want.”

The other spoke with a cold voice, “Let’s go. We must be careful by all means. We cannot allow this secret to be easily revealed unless they actually manage to extract the Heavenvoid Cauldron.

“Of course!” The first to speak nodded his head in approval.

With that said, the two shot towards the stone gate as two streaks of white light.

...

Han Li was walking behind Zenith Yin and was unexpectedly beside Wu Chou, much to Han Li’s displeasure.

Possibly due to what Zenith Yin had said to Wu Chou before, Wu Chou acted very cordially to Han Li on the way. He would on occasion talk about some trivial matters with Han Li as to avoid treating Han Li coldly. It was as if his hateful gaze from before had come from an entirely different person.

But the further this fake act continued, the gloomier Han Li felt.

Han Li couldn't help but bitterly laugh to himself in his mind, "Did Zenith Yin hint to Wu Chou that they would kill me after they acquire the treasure? Is that why Wu Chou was acting so different?"

Although he was very much worried underneath, Han Li spoke to Wu Chou with a smile, producing an fake atmosphere between the two. Even those over thirty meters away could clearly make it out.

Still, Zenith Yin and the others turned a blind eye to those as they continued forward. Every since the three Nascent Soul eccentrics entered the Inner Hall, they've become solemn in contrast to their relaxed, easy attitude from before.

But what baffled Han Li the most was even after such a long period of time has passed, nothing had occurred. They had neither encountered any restrictions nor dangers.

Could it be that they had triggered some sort of restriction after entering the stone gate?

With that thought, Han Li couldn't help but further examine his surroundings.

Old Chinese Idiom: The mantis stalks the cicada, unaware of the Oriole behind it.

Chapter 475: Wolf Head Puppets

Currently, Han Li and the others were walking through a maze-like series of intersecting stone passageways. Each intersection had a stone gate inscribed with strange talisman characters.

These stone gates were identical in size. They were over thirty meters wide and were in the shape of a square. They would always point in the direction of north, south, east, or west seemingly at random. However, they all shined with a faint white light. They were clearly affected by some sort of restriction.

Although he would only encounter a crossroads after a long distance, Han Li reckoned that during their entire time in the Inner Halls, they've already encountered at least eight stone gates. Each time, they neither changed direction or entered the stone gates.

They eventually arrived at an intersection that made Han Li's expression stir.

The gate there slightly differed from the others ones. Although its talisman characters and structure was the same, it was completely lightless as if the restriction on it had been extinguished. As a result, Han Li further looked at it with a strange expression.

Wu Chou saw Han Li's expression and spoke to him with a familiar tone, "Junior Martial Brother Han, this stone gate had already had its treasure seized by others. What is worth seeing? If

it weren't for the fact that each person could only use a single Heavenvoid map fragment before being teleported out, I would've also thought to pick a stone gate and hastily see what was within. Once a Heavenvoid Map fragment was used to open a stone gate, one would be unable to leave until the treasure was acquired. As Core Formation cultivators we will only be able to acquire treasures on the first floor. Picking a room on the later floors would nearly be the same as suicide."

'Junior Martial Brother Han?' When Han Li heard Wu Chou address him as such in a voice transmission, he felt disgust spread throughout his body.

When Han Li eventually managed to recollect himself, he replied with a beaming smile, "Then why isn't Brother Wu choosing a gate on the first floor? Would it not be a waste of an opportunity to wait until you've arrived to the second floor or higher?"

"Sigh! I wish I could, but my esteemed grandfather had repeatedly warned me that I must stay by his side on this treasure hunt as I may prove useful." Wu Chou wore a reluctant expression as he glanced at the stone gate. A trace of greed flickered from his eyes.

Han Li slightly smiled and swept his gaze at the stone gate. So long as he entered and acquired the treasure it contained, he would be teleported outside. He would be keeping this in mind. Who knew whether or not he could use this as a method of escape?

At that moment, the group passed through another intersection and into the passage ahead of them. But at that moment, a heavy,

muffled thud came from their front. The sound continued as if something huge was slowly heading towards them.

Zenith Yin and Qing Yi's expressions slightly changed and they halted, staring into the passageway ahead of them with grave expressions. In contrast, Man Huzi chuckled and revealed a trace of excitement. At the same time, his body flashed with golden light and a layer of golden scales suddenly covered his entire body. He had activated his Heavenbearing Devil Arts.

This was the first time Han Li saw the bizarre appearance of the Heavenbearing Devil Arts up close. He couldn't help but take a curious stare at Man Huzi's transformation.

Man Huzi keenly felt Han Li's stare and turned his head around, giving Han Li's sinister grin. The face covered in small scales made for a frightening sight.

Han Li's heart dropped, not knowing what he had meant by it. But still, he forced himself to return the smile.

Fortunately, after Man Huzi smiled, he immediately turned his gaze back.

The approaching thuds were now only about a hundred meters away.

But as the passage across from them was pitch-black, Han Li wasn't able to see within it. There were still restrictions inside the

Inner Hall that restrained a cultivator's spiritual sense.

Still, Han Li noticed the cold glint from the old eccentrics' eyes. It seemed they were able to see what it was.

Without waiting for Zenith Yin and Qing Yi to act, Man Huzi deeply roared, flying into the passage as a streak of golden light. A series of loud impacts followed afterwards along with deafening clangs of metal.

When Zenith Yin and Qing Yi saw this, they couldn't help but look at each other in dismay.

Han Li was at a loss when a huge rumble sounded out as if something had been cleanly split into fragments.

Han Li's mind stirred and something came to mind.

In the next moment, only the sounds of Man Huzi's wild, carefree laughter could be heard.

Zenith Yin seemed to have thought of something and couldn't help but laugh. "Let's go! It is no longer a problem. We've already forgotten that we no longer have the same cultivation as we did three hundred years ago. The guards on the first layer are no longer a threat to us."

Qing Yi chuckled with a relaxed expression, "That's right. This old man had nearly forgotten this as well. The last time I came, I

had just entered Nascent Soul stage, and the guards had left far too deep an impression. It was good that Brother Man had taken care of it with his Heavenbearing Devil Arts. Else, we would've spent too much effort on them."

Afterwards, the two began to take the lead with Han Li and Wu Chou closely following after them. The Bone Sage, who had originally been expressionless this entire time, wore a trace of disdain as he calmly followed them in the back.

After walking about thirty meters, Han Li saw Man Huzi in front of them with his hands behind his back. He was standing on something that was shining with silver light.

When Man Huzi saw Zenith Yin, he stretched his neck and indifferently said, "Not bad! This served quite well for a warm up. The Heavenvoid Hall this time around is truly interesting. However, it wasn't nearly as formidable as rumors had it!"

"It was because of the incredible force of Brother Man's Heavenbearing Devil Arts. Other cultivators used magic treasures in such a narrow area, so they had experienced a bit of trouble." Layman Qing Yi said with a smile. When Man Huzi heard his flattery, he chuckled but said no more. The golden scales on his body quickly faded away, and he indifferently took the way. It seemed the previous fight had left him unsatisfied.

Zenith Yin and Qing Yi glanced at each other with a smile. Since Man Huzi was so willing to lead the way, they were more than willing to quietly follow after him.

When they walked past the silver item, Han Li stopped and lowered his head to look at the item.

‘A mechanical puppet!’ Han Li was astounded. It was indeed a puppet, but what grade of puppet was this to have not been instantly destroyed by a mid Nascent Soul stage cultivator?

Most of what was scattered across the ground were pieces of an unknown silver metal. Apart from this, there was a ruined half of a gold wolve’s head, several pieces of jet-black, thick and reflectionless blades, as well as an assortment of several other oddities.

As the Bone Sage quickly passed him by, he indifferently said without turning his head, “Don’t bother to look at them. While these items are certainly rare, they cannot be used to refine any magic treasures. Those long before have already tried.”

Han Li was surprised by this, but he continued to look at the ground as if he hadn’t heard. His gaze fell upon sparkling, dark-green gem on the ground. Its extremely cold aura gave Han Li a remarkable impression.

After muttering to himself for a moment, Han Li immediately placed these items into his storage pouch with a sweep of his hand before rejoining the others.

Han Li’s thoughts were quite simple. Even if these items were truly useless, he could learn a bit about the ancient cultivator’s

achievements in puppet techniques from the puppet's composition and refinement techniques. After all, the highest grade puppets in his Puppet Sutra were grade four puppets, equivalent to only late Foundation Establishment cultivators at false core stage. It was a puppet he had seen before, the huge tiger that consumed an entire mid-grade spirit stone with a full powered strike.

The puppet with the golden wolf head was stronger than an early Core Formation cultivator. Although Man Huzi dealt with it like child's play without using any powerful magic treasures, Zenith Yin's and Layman Qing Yi's serious attitude towards indicated that it was extraordinary.

With such good items in hand, it was only natural for Han Li to want to leave and research it. But as things stood, there would be no such opportunity for him to slip away a stone gate and escape with treasure as well. He understood all too well that despite walking ahead of him, the three Nascent Soul eccentrics were watching his every move through their spiritual sense. Wanting to stealthily slip away through a stone gate was merely wishful thinking.

With Han Li's temperament, it felt somewhat intolerable to leave empty handed from a treasure trove such as this. For now, he could view these puppet fragments as a consolation prize from the Inner Halls. As for the treasures of the Heavenvoid Cauldron, Han Li knew better than to have such fanciful expectations!

Chapter 476: The Second Floor

Following after the first encounter with the wolf head puppet, they encountered more puppets in quick succession. But under the unyielding transformation of the Heavenbearing Devil Arts, Man Huzi smashed them into pieces as if they were made of clay. Zenith Yin and Qing Yi didn't need to help the slightest.

With each encounter, Han Li bluntly gathered and put away the remains of each puppet, much to the confusion of the Bone Sage and Wu Chou.

As for the Nascent Soul cultivators, they turned a blind eye to Han Li's actions.

However, it was clear that they walked a path from Wan Tianming's party. When Han Li saw that the Devil Dao cultivators were still calm and unhurried, Han Li knew that these old devils probably had an approximation of where they were.

But ever since they encountered the puppet guards, Zenith Yin and the others no longer continued straight ahead. They began to take turns.

However, Han Li felt that there was something odd. From their earlier advance, Han Li had a clear feeling that all pathways were the same. But these three Nascent soul cultivators made a sudden turn to the left and another turn to the right without the slightest hesitation. It was as if they already knew the route in advance.

Were it just Zenith Yin and Qing Yi doing this, Han Li wouldn't find it strange. After all, they've been to the Inner Halls before. Perhaps they already memorized the route from their last time here. But this was clearly Man Huzi's first time coming here and he was leading them at the very front with Zenith Yin and Qing Yi following after him without any objections. Han Li found this baffling!

Han Li's mind set into motion as he stealthily swept the intersections for any differences or markings.

After passing several intersections, his efforts were vainly spent as he had found nothing. He could only leave the matter be for now.

After Man Huzi wrecked the eighth wolf head puppet along the way, they arrived at a small transportation formation.

The transportation formation was at the center of an intersection and emitted a faint, sparkling light.

"This will take us to the second floor. I wonder if Wan Tianming and his party had used any tricks. They actually managed to get ahead of us." Layman Qing Yi grumbled upon seeing the transportation formation, but a trace of a grin was still on his face.

Man Huzi coldly snorted and said without concern, "Humph! Let's go. Even if they're ahead of us, the Heavenvoid Cauldron isn't something that is so easily acquired."

Soon after, he let the way, entering the transportation formation in stride.

Layman Qing Yi smiled at the sight. After Man Huzi entered, Zenith Yin and Layman Qing Yi stood still. After taking a glance at each other, they heavily gazed at Han Li.

Han Li felt his heart shiver.

He had no choice but to enter the transportation formation under their supervision.

Han Li saw a flash of white light and regained his bearings before raising his head.

He was shocked. He was at another intersection of stone passageways. If it weren't for Man Huzi standing in front of him, Han Li would've thought that the transportation formation had failed.

While Han Li was at a loss, white light flashed from behind him, bringing along the rest of the party.

Just as Zenith Yin appeared, he took a look around. He grimaced and muttered, "What method did those Righteous Dao folk use to travel so fast? I can no longer find them."

Layman Qing Yi's eyes coldly glinted as he stood behind Zenith Yin. "Leave it be! I had felt it was strange as to why the Righteous

Dao cultivators had made such a sly proposal outside. From we've seen, it seems they were scheming against us all along. But, it'll still be fine if they try to seize the treasure first. Actually acquiring the Heavenvoid Cauldron with Wan Tianming's Gold Threaded Silkworm is merely wishful thinking after all. They're merely testing what little luck they have. It wouldn't be too late for us to hide and lie in ambush."

"Brother Qing's words makes sense! However, we cannot delay for too long. We must quicken our pace." Zenith Yin nodded his head. He agreed a much improved expression.

Qing Yi spoke to Man Huzi with a solemn expression, "Brother Man, be careful! The snake puppets guards on this floor are somewhat troublesome. Fellow Daoist Wu and I can both provide assistance in taking them down. This way, we can save a bit of time and magic power. Let's prevent having a weakness the Righteous Dao can exploit."

"Snake puppet guards? That seems interesting! Do as you like." Man Huzi said with a careless tone.

The party of Devil Dao cultivators then continued on their way.

Not long after, Han Li discovered a difference between the first and second floor.

The crossroads on the second floor were much smaller than the first floor. They were also farther apart with a few fearsome traps and restrictions placed down along the way.

Although these things didn't pose a threat to a Nascent Soul cultivator, they were undoubtedly deadly to Core Formation cultivators. Han Li felt a cold chill down his spine as he followed after the others.

There was no question that he would've lost his life to the restrictions and traps had he entered the second floor of the Inner Halls alone.

By the time they crossed the intersection on the second floor, Han Li finally saw the "snake puppet guard".

The puppet appeared truly disgusting.

Its snake heads were both blue and red, but its body were also covered in jet-black scales. It also had two arms on both their back and front.

Its front two arms held green short spears, and its back two arms held glossy black whips with razor sharp barbs that glowed the grey Qi.

When the puppet saw them, it immediately charged towards them as a black streak of light without a sound. It's actions were extremely quick.

Man Huzi howled with laughter. He charged to meet it after activating his Heavenbearing Devil Arts.

The following scene left Han Li in awe. The snake demon puppet was extraordinarily swift with its green spears and flailing whips. Although its unceasing barrage of attacks didn't pose much of a threat to Man Huzi, he was forced to protect a few of his vital spots. As he wasn't using any magic treasures, he had no other actions open to him.

While it was unknown what materials the green spears were made from, they slightly deformed Man Huzi's gold-clad hands on impact, leaving behind two cuts.

An expression of astonishment was betrayed from Man Huzi's face.

It was at this time that Zenith Yin and Qing Yi decided to act.

Zenith Yin used the Heavenvoid Corpsefire that had inspired fear in Han Li when he had first met him.

A black ball of flame appeared in his hand before turning into a fine black thread as it shot out.

Just as the puppet pierced through Man Huzi's Heavenbearing Devil Art, it had left its guard down. In an instant, one of its front arms was enveloped by black flames and disappeared.

As for the old man, Qing Yi opened his mouth and an azure thread of light wildly rushed out from his mouth towards the

puppet.

The azure thread of light wrapped once around the puppet and bursted into a cluster of explosions, causing the puppet to tumble.

A fierce expression flashed from Man Huzi's face. Taking advantage of the opportunity, he released a low roar and the scene flourished with blinding light. He then appeared with his arm penetrating the abdomen of the puppet. A green gem was rigidly held in his grasp.

The snake puppet immediately lost the power to move and collapsed to the floor.

Man Huzi looked at the inanimate puppet and glanced at the green gem in his hand. With a malicious expression flickering from his face, he crushed the gem with a clench of his hand.

But after he unfolded his hand, he found the gem to be completely unharmed.

Even Man Huzi's ordinarily savage expression changed upon seeing this.

With his Heavenbearing Devil Arts infused into his hands, he would've been able to warp powered magic treasures, let alone a single gem. He should've been able to somewhat damage it at the very least.

As Man Huzi's face appeared somewhat blank, Qing Qi chuckled and walked over, "Brother Man, there is no need to be surprised! This strange stone had already been researched by others. Although this gem cannot be destroyed, it also cannot be refined or used to strengthen magic treasures. I reckon that unless the cultivators of antiquity were dealing with it, it just be a mere bauble. Even puppet refinement sects don't know what to do with the stone."

"The items of antiquity are quite unusual! Youngster, you seem to fond of such remains. Here!" Concealing his embarrassment from earlier, Man Huzi grimaced and casually tossed it to Han Li.

Han Li's mind went blank and he unconsciously received the item.

After he had realized what had happened, he silently put it away into his storage pouch.

After he swept his gaze around, he walked forward and swept up the snake puppet remains with a trace of politeness.

Chapter 477: An Unexpected Discovery

As Han Li went to collect the two green spears, he faintly felt Zenith Yin eyeing the items, but he soon stealthily turned his gaze away.

Although this action had been quite stealthy, it had caused Han Li's heart to shiver.

These two short spears were definitely good items and Zenith Yin wanted them for himself. But he couldn't forcefully acquire them now and lose sight of the Heavenvoid Cauldron.

This, however, merely gave Zenith Yin yet another reason to dispose of Han Li afterwards.

With that thought, Han Li lowered his head and bitterly smiled. His expression quickly returned to normal before he raised his head.

After that, the three Nascent Soul cultivators worked together. Although the puppets and restrictions on this floor were somewhat fierce, nobody suffered any damage when they passed through this floor and moved onto the third.

...

Half a day later at some place on the fifth floor of the Inner Halls, there were three people discussing something in a whisper. They

were Wan Tianming's party of Righteous Dao cultivators.

Not far in front of them laid an enormous stone platform. It was over four hundred meters wide and about a hundred meters tall. It appeared to be entirely made from the same common grey stone. There were several hundred steps in front of it leading to the very top, and it was covered in a white light barrier.

But what was most odd was the blue radiance lying inside the light barrier. This blue radiance grew brighter as it approached the top with blinding glimmers roaming within it. It made for a scene so brilliant, one could not look directly at it and see what was within.

To the side of the stone platform was a thick block of ice. Its clear shimmers made for a beautiful contrast to the stone next to it.

Standing in front of the stone platform, Wan Tianming said in a deep voice, "What? Your magic power has almost recovered? If that's the case, let's set off! Although we're using the Divine Fate Sect's Creation Rites to evade the puppet guards, we still don't have much time. Man Huzi's Heavenbearing Devil Arts should be able deal with the puppets with ease. Only when he reaches the fourth floor would he have to expend more effort."

The old Daoist Tian Wuzi spoke in agreement with a trace of excitement in his eyes, "Brother Wan speaks true. Let's go get the treasure."

The old dark-skinned farmer silently nodded and said nothing

else.

Wan Tianming did not mind his actions. He knew that although this shriveled old man was taciturn, his Jade Core Arts was quite remarkable. Its true strength was beyond that of even Tian Wuzi.

Despite having emerged from the Righteous Dao, he had spent most of his time in concealed cultivation and rarely interacted with others, leading to his detached mannerisms.

Wan Tianming smiled and led the two into the light barrier.

A dense wisp of purple smoke flickered through the air, and the barrier of white light released out a resounding hum. With a wave of his hand, Wan Tianming split open a three meter tall opening, allowing them to walk through in a line.

Soon, Wan Tianming and the others disappeared into the blue light as they climbed. The tear in the light barrier repaired itself and the steps became quiet once more.

After an unknown amount of time, Man Huzi and Zenith Yin appeared before the light barrier, but Wan Tianming's party was already long gone.

Han Li and the others soon appeared behind them.

Qing Yi looked at the large stone platform in front of him and said with shining eyes, "We've finally arrived at this damned

place. The gold haired puppets on the fourth floor were extraordinarily vicious. Had we not all exert our special skills, we would've been tangled down for quite some time.”

Zenith Yin said with a gloomy expression, “Humph! The puppets weren't much. The restrictions we encountered on the third floor were quite difficult to break, consuming much of our time. Else, we would've arrived here earlier.”

“What is the point of saying such nonsense after already arriving? First, let's see whether or not Wan Tianming had already went to seize the treasure.” Man Huzi frowned and spoke with impatience.

Zenith Yin appeared somewhat displeased by his words, but he didn't respond.

Wearing his ordinary expression, Layman Qing Yi chuckled and said, “Relax, Brother Man. According to Brother Wu and my secret probing arts, Wan Tianming's party had already ascended several hours ago, but they have yet to leave. It would be best for us to wait here as these stairs are the only entrance and exit from the Frozen Dragon's Terrace.

“The only way? Is that true? The Righteous Dao cultivators could be slipping away at this moment as we foolishly wait for them.” Man Huzi glanced at the old man and seemed to distrust him.

The old man twirled his beard as he said, “Hehe! There is not question about this. This light barrier was famous even in times of

antiquity. It was known as the Celestial Tailstar Restriction. Apart from the opening at the steps, there are no other exits that can be easily opened.”

Man Huzi nodded his head, “Fine, we’ll do just that.” He then sat cross legged near the steps and began meditating.

As for Zenith Yin and Qing Yi, they moved close to each other and started having a whispered discussion.

After seeing all of this, Han Li wryly smiled in his mind, but betrayed none of this from his face.

These Devil Dao cultivators weren’t incorrect in their actions, but Wan Tianming appeared to be a rather shrewd person himself. Perhaps he had wanted them to wait outside all along.

With that thought, Han Li looked around. He found that the Bone Sage was the only person that was close to the stone platform. He gazed into the white light barrier as if he were thinking of something.

Han Li’s expression stirred. This was a good opportunity to have another discussion, but he soon had second thoughts. This old devil forged a relationship between him and Man Huzi. Han Li’s value towards should’ve decreased tremendously. It was most likely that he had the same thoughts as Zenith Yin, to use his Bloodjade Spiders to acquire the Heavenvoid Cauldron and dispose of him afterwards.

Why else would he forego this excellent opportunity to kill Zenith Yin? It must be to first acquire the treasure!

If he were to take the initiative to contact him, he would merely be allowing the Bone Sage to see through his doubts. The situation could only become worse as a result!

It seems he would have to rely on himself to plan for his escape.

With that in mind, Han Li's gaze unconsciously turned cold as he looked at the Bone Sage. The Bone Sage seemed to have perceived something and turned his head, happening to see Han Li.

Han Li inwardly cursed and immediately restored his normal expression. He then walked off as if nothing had occurred.

As the Bone Sage stared at Han Li from behind, a trace of doubt flickered from his face.

At that moment, Han Li was leisurely circling around the huge stone platform along with the light barrier that surrounded it.

As Zenith Yin and the others doubted it was possible for an early Core Formation cultivator to escape from the fifth floor, Han Li was relieved to find that he was allowed to move as he wished.

Not longer after, Han Li was by himself behind the back of the platform. There was a limestone wall that opposed the light barrier covering the stairs.

The wall was inscribed with a few strange beasts from ancient times along with a few talisman markings. It wasn't particularly notable.

Han Li had seen many of these walls inside the Inner Hall and knew that they possessed no profound restrictions. But even Nascent Soul cultivators had no method of breaking the wall.

As such, even if Han Li knew that the wall led to outside the Inner Halls, he was completely powerless.

Han Li inwardly cursed the ancient cultivators for making their Inner Halls damned impenetrable and fiercely slapped the stone wall out of overwhelming frustration. The slap released a muffled thud.

He walked off for about four steps before he made a sudden stop. He then slowly turned around with an expression of complete disbelief.

Were it a common cultivator who had heard this noise, they may have left without care as the sound wasn't anything that was particularly notable.

However, Han Li was someone that had emerged from a sect from JiangHu. He had previously researched quite a bit about hidden room mechanisms.

From that recent sound, he was able to tell that the limestone was hollow.

Han Li couldn't believe himself. He truly doubted his inference.

There existed a hidden layer in a place where ancient cultivators had enveloped with profound restrictions.

Of course, Han Li wasn't about a walk away from it.

After muttering to himself for a moment, he swiftly returned to the wall. He extended two fingers and began tapping around the limestone wall he had struck earlier.

On his third tap on the limestone wall, Han Li's heart stirred. His eyes fell upon the red eyes of a carving of a winged demon beast.

Although the engraving didn't store any essence, it appeared vivid and lifelike. The beast's berserk bloodlust was displayed in brilliant detail.

Han Li merely glanced at the drawing for a moment before resuming the light taps on the stone wall.

He eventually became pleasantly certain that the stone was indeed hollow and that something was contained within.

Chapter 478: Gold Threaded Silkworms

Acquiring the Treasure

Han Li didn't immediately take action. Instead, he carefully released his spiritual sense and searched his surroundings. Certain that Zenith Yin and the others weren't spying on him, he no longer hesitated and extended his finger. A blade of azure swordlight extended from its tip.

Han Li calmly used the swordlight to carve a fist sized hole in the stone wall before willing it away.

He then used his other hand to quickly touch the circle, causing a gap to appear in the stone wall.

Han Li knew that his time was limited and instantly extended his arm into the hole. The area within wasn't large. After randomly reaching out, he managed to grab onto something. His expression stirred.

The item was slender, curved, and soft. After he took it out from the wall, he saw that it was an aged yellow scroll.

Just about as Han Li was about to open it with amazement, his expression suddenly changed and he quickly placed the scroll in his robes. His body blurred as he placed his back against the hole in the wall, pretending to rest against it.

Just as Han Li finished his movements, he heard Zenith Yin's

gloomy voice, “Han Li, return to us quickly. We are about to enter.”

Having heard that, Han Li astonishment flickered from his eyes. Weren't they to rest for the time being? Why the sudden change of mind? Could it be the three old devils became aware of something amiss?

After Han Li felt Zenith Yin's spiritual sense disappeared from his surroundings, he immediately turned around and repaired the stone hole. He then walked back to the front of the stone platform.

When he arrived at the front, the old devils were standing in front of the steps, looking upwards with a grave expression. Standing behind them, Wu Chou and the Bone Sage were mimicking them.

Han Li astonishedly followed their gaze up the stairs.

He could only see blue light up above, twinkling with blinding intensity. Several threads of gold light flashed out from a flicker of blue light. In a short moment, those threads became several inches thicker. But because of the separation of the white light barrier, Han Li was unable to feel anything strange.

Zenith Yin nodded when he saw Han Li arrived. He turned his head to Man Huzi and said, “Brother Man, my junior disciple has arrived. Let us go up. I hadn't expected that Wan Tianming's Gold Threaded Silkworm could actually rock the Heavenvoid Cauldron. Although I don't know how this happened, it would be best for us

to go see.”

Man Huzi replied by wordlessly approaching the stairs. Zenith Yin and the others closely followed after him.

Boom! Man Huzi endowed his fist in devilish arts and fiercely bashed the light barrier, blowing open a ten-meter-large hole.

Man Huzi took the lead. Zenith Yin and Layman Qing Yi surrounded Han Li and forced him to walk between them. The Bone Sage and Wu Chou followed them from behind.

‘So cold!’ Although Han Li had made a few preparations outside the light barrier, Han Li couldn’t help but shiver from the surrounding cold. He quickly covered his body in a barrier of light, greatly reducing the chill.

Man Huzi didn’t wait for the rest of them. He walked straight towards the center of the flourishing blue light with large steps.

After Qing Yi and Zenith Yin glanced at each other, they couldn’t help but wryly smile as they caught up to him. But before Zenith Yin chased after Man Huzi, he turned to look at Han Li, indicating that he had best hurry.

Han Li released a torrent of curses at Zenith Yin in his mind. He knew his place and didn’t have any thoughts to flee. He merely wanted to drag along at the back and take a look at the scroll. It could perhaps provide assistance towards his current predicament.

However, Zenith Yin's extortion seemed to remind Wu Chou of something. He began to stare at Han Li with absolute focus. The Bone Sage then shot a look at doubt at Han Li.

Han Li had no choice but to quicken his steps. But after he walked several steps, his speed slowed down through no intention of his own.

Although his light barrier was protecting from from the freezing blue light, Han Li felt a chill pass through his body with each step he took. After only a short moment, his face turned pale white. He quickly closed his mouth, fearing the frost would spread throughout his core.

At that moment, Han Li heard Zenith Yin's voice in his ear, "The White Rhino Emblem doesn't only protect from the heat. It also works against the cold! What are you waiting for!"

Han Li came to a sudden realization and hastily brought the item out, hanging it from his waist. Once the White Rhino Emblem brightly shined with light, he instantly felt warmth surround him. No longer impeded by the cold, Han Li leisurely walked forward and glanced how the others dealt with the cold.

Man Huzi and the other Nascent Soul cultivators only used a light barrier on their bodies and continued without obstruction. As for the Bone Sage, he wore a chain of sparkling red beads and displayed no trace of cold.

As for Wu Chou, he had put on a grotesque serpent scale armband that emitted a pink light barrier around his body.

Han Li then turned his gaze to the center of the platform up above. There was a small altar protruding his vision. There were eight orbs of gold light pulsing above the altar. At the center of the lights, there was a large hold that shined with blinding blue light.

Han Li's mind was roused at the sight. He quickly examine the scene.

Each of the golden orbs of light contained a meter-long silkworm with each worm pulling on the thick golden thread they released into the hole. Their bodies swayed as they tugged back as forcefully as they could. Each sway caused the blue light from the hole to wildly flicker.

Three silhouettes were standing to the side of the altar. They were Wan Tianming's party of Righteous Dao cultivators.

They clearly knew that Man Huzi and the others had arrived, but they completely ignored them. They were only focused on the golden light in front of them, each with a tense expression.

A cold glint flickered through Man Huzi's eyes when he saw the scene. He wordlessly raised his hand and shot two streaks of golden light towards the Righteous Dao cultivators.

“Glacial Dragon!”

“Phantom Tortoise!”

Wan Tianming and Tian Wuzi simultaneously shouted as they coldly gazed in the direction of the attack. With a sudden burst of fluctuating sounds, two streaks of azure and blue light intercepted the golden lights.

“Return!” Man Huzi was startled by their quick reaction and had two streaks of golden light return with a wave of his hand. They landed in his hand as two golden knives.

The azure and blue lights didn’t pursue and instead revolved in place. Their true appearances were revealed to be a ten-meter-long white flood dragon and a bizarre transparent turtle.

After Man Huzi clearly saw what those two things were, he appeared surprised.

“The Mad Matron’s Glacial Dragon and Tian Yuanzi’s Phantom Tortoise!” Layman Qing Yi blurted this out with a face of astonishment.

“It was no wonder that Wan Tianming’s party was so arrogant. Those two old eccentrics had lent them their spirit beasts. From what I know, those two old freaks treasure those spirit beasts to the point where they would never leave their side. Just how do they have them in their possession?” Zenith Yin spoke with an aghast voice and a resentful expression.

Man Huzi replied with a solemn expression, “Humph! Just look at the borrowers. Wan Tianming is the Mad Matron’s blood nephew. Tian Wuzi and Tian Yuanzi are disciples of the same master. There is nothing odd about being lent those two spirit beasts.”

As Layman Qingyi worryingly gazed at the white flood dragon and the huge tortoise, he said, “This is going to become troublesome! Those two beasts are by no means weak. Even if us three were to do our utmost, we would be unable to break away from them for quite some time.”

Man Huzi wore a sinister grin and said, “Qing Yi, Zenith Yin! Have your Azure Thorn Bird and Heavenwide Corpse distract them. They might not prove to be an opponent to those beasts, but we need those beasts occupied for a moment if we are to act. We don’t even need to defeat Wan Tianming and the others. It will be fine so long as we can kill one of the Gold Threaded Silkworms.”

Having heard this, the Zenith Yin and Qing Yi looked at each other in dismay and revealed some hesitation.

“Don’t worry, I will also send my spirit beast to fight. They should prove to be quite troublesome all together!” Man Huzi glanced at the two and wore an expression of slight disdain.

With that said, Qing Yi’s and Zenith Yin’s expressions relaxed, and they agreed.

Chapter 479: The Sky Blue Flower

Before Zenith Yin could release his demon corpses or Qing Yi release his spirit beast, an astonishing change had occurred.

One of the huge green silkworms in the orbs of light suddenly trembled. The golden light surrounding it quickly dimmed. At nearly the same time, its gold thread was severed with a snap.

“Not good!” The Righteous Dao cultivators to the side shouted out in alarm. But before they could take action, the other Gold Threaded Silkworms followed suit. Their golden light greatly dimmed, and two of the gold threads snapped.

Wan Tianming’s heart dropped into an abyss. He stood still in a daze.

But it still wasn’t the end! Three silkworms remained and the collapse of half of their companions caused their burden to quickly increase. They cried out as they were dragged towards the hole with immense force. Soon after, the huge clang of something heavy being dropped could be heard. Immediately after, the stone platform trembled for a while after. The blue light coming from the hole immediately dimmed and the air became significantly warmer.

The faces of the Righteous Dao cultivators became extremely unsightly.

As for the old devils that were about to act, their eyes were

uncharacteristically wide open with their faces wearing expressions of extreme marvel.

“Hahahaha.....” Man Huzi guffawed with delight. Even his yellow beard was wildly shaking.

At that moment, Zenith Yin and Qing Yi responded, both basking in schadenfreude, laughing at the Righteous Dao cultivators without restraint.

At that moment, Wan Tianming’s face became ashen.

In order to acquire the treasure, he had spent much effort concocting this plan and at great cost. And what did he gain? The ridicule of his Devil Dao rivals. This set Wan Tianming’s heart aflame. He could no longer restrain himself and suddenly turned to the Devil Dao cultivators with a chilling expression.

Zenith Yin’s and Qing Yi’s laughter halted for a moment.

Wan Tianming was a mid Nascent Soul cultivator. Even if they were already on opposing sides, the two were unwilling to rashly breed a deep hatred between them. As for Man Huzi, despite no longer laughing, he returned the glare with no trace of politeness.

“What? Sect Master Wan wishes to battle with me? I do wish to experience the True Heavensifting Art’s Three Confucian Marvels.”

After coldly glaring at Man Huzi for a moment, Wan Tianming eventually regained his rationality.

“Go!” With a wave of his sleeve, he led the departure from the stone platform, ignoring the remaining Gold Threaded Silkworms and recalling the White Flood Dragon from its confrontation against the Devil Dao.

With an equivalently unsightly expression, Tian Wuzi recalled the huge tortoise and followed Wan Tianming. As for the old farmer, despite his cold gaze, he followed after them with a far calmer expression.

Just as the Righteous and Devil Dao brushed past each other, they glanced at each other with extreme vigilance.

Despite being extremely domineering, Man Huzi fortunately didn't provoke them. He merely sneered at Wan Tianming and the others as they disappeared from the light barrier.

Qing Yi looked behind them and said, “I'll have my Azure Thorn Bird hide at the entrance. If the Righteous Dao fellows come back, we will know.”

Zenith Yin shifted his gaze and sinisterly smiled, “Then I will also dispatch two Heavenwide Corpses to lie in ambush at the entrance. If they attempt to mount a sneak attack, they will be deterred.”

After Qing Yi heard this, his gaze grew blank, and he soon

became silent. A moment later, his sleeve trembled and a fist-sized streak of light shot towards the sky.

As for Zenith Yin, he tossed something on the floor. Two puffs of black smoke spread out along with a fishy scent where two tall demon corpses emerged.

“Go!” Zenith Yin solemnly pointed towards the entrance. In an instant, the demon corpses blurred and disappeared from sight.

The scene caused Han Li’s heart to tremble as he recalled the demon corpse’s strange appearance when it had first appeared before him. He couldn’t help but feel fearful towards the demon corpses.

Afterwards, Han Li’s attention shifted towards the Gold Threaded Silkworms that were lying down the altar. He couldn’t help but curiously walk over to them. But after taking only a few steps, he stopped. Someone had already quickly arrived in front of them. Han Li was astonished to discover this person to be the Bone Sage!

Man Huzi walked over and asked, “What’s this about? The Gold Threaded Silkworm could be considered a rare exotic insect. From their previous golden light, their abilities should be quite formidable. It is quite strange of Wan Tianming to abandon them without care!”

After examining the Gold Threaded Silkworm for a moment, the Bone Sage calmly answered, “They had consumed the Sky Blue

Flower to forcefully raise their capabilities so that they might have a better chance at acquiring the Heavenvoid Cauldron. But after consuming it, the Gold Threaded Silkworm could be considered to be completely crippled.”

“I had originally thought the Gold Threaded Silkworms couldn’t acquire the Heavenvoid Cauldron! But to use the Sky Blue flower, hehe! He ended up losing everything from trying to gain an advantage.” Man Huzi couldn’t help but laugh in response to the Bone Sage’s words.

Zenith Yin walked over with his hands behind his back. “Sky Blue Flower? I didn’t think that Wan Tianming could actually find it. I had thought of using such a method before, but I was unable to find the flower after so many years of searching. For Brother Man’s Junior to know of such a flower, he must be a renowned character! Perhaps I’ve heard this Junior’s name before?” After he changed the subject, he stared at the Bone Sage’s face.

The Bone Sage softly spoke with a smile, “My name is not renowned. I am merely someone who spent too much time reading books. Senior Wu jests.”

“Is that so?” Zenith Yin said with an indifferent expression. It was unknown whether his suspicions had been exhausted or if he was fearful of repercussion from Man Huzi, but Zenith Yin gave up his questioning and turned towards the large hole and peered within. The blue light from the hole reflected off his face, making for a weird sight.

Han Li indifferently watched from the side, but in his mind, he

felt slight admiration at the Bone Sage's patience. Old Devil Bone Sage's temperament must be quite fearsome indeed for him to so calmly address his enemy as 'Senior'.

Nevertheless, there was no one here that was fooled, except for perhaps Wu Chou. Each of them were sly foxes that had lived for over several hundred years. They were devious to an extreme.

Just as Han Li gloomily thought this, he heard Qing Yi say, "Since these Gold Threaded Silkworms are useless, let's exterminate them and remove their irksome presence from our eyes. Qing Yi then flipped his wrinkled palm and a ball of blinding azure light appeared in his hands.

After Han Li's gaze swept past the three huge silkworms, his heart stirred. He spoke to the old man, "Wait! This Junior is interested in these Gold Threaded Silkworms. Please give them to him!"

The old man's face revealed both surprise and doubt. Han Li then smiled and cupped his hands, saying, "This one has always been interested in exotic insects. Since they're still alive, this one wishes to research them for some time. This one hopes Senior will allow this."

Having heard Han Li, Qing Yi didn't immediately reply. Instead, he examined Han Li with a pensive expression. Han Li felt his heart on edge. He didn't know what intentions Qing Yi held.

Qing Yi shook his head and spoke lamentably, "Sigh! This old

man was also rogue cultivator. I naturally know that Core Formation rogue cultivators aren't comparable to their peers from great sects. How they are truly pressed for resources. Fine, since Young Friend Han wants this rubbish, take it!" It was clear that he had misunderstood.

Han Li inwardly rolled his eyes, but he took advantage of the situation and wore an embarrassed expression as he repeatedly expressed his thanks. Afterwards, he reached for an empty spirit beast pouch and stored the three Gold Threaded Silkworms within it.

It appeared as though that at the same time Wan Tianming had discarded them, he had also erased his marks of ownership from them. As such, they entered Han Li's pouch without a trace of resistance.

After staring into the hole for a moment more with fervent eyes, Zenith Yin shouted at Han Li without turning his head, "Han Li, stop wasting your time on these useless matters. Quickly take out your Bloodjade Spiders. I want to see what grade the spirit beasts are. When the time comes, I will provide some assistance with my flame python. We must succeed in one attempt!"

Han Li inwardly frowned and walked forward.

Layman Qing Yi and Man Huzi happened to glance at Han Li after hearing Zenith Yin.

"Be at ease, so long as you acquire the Heavenvoid Cauldron,

your master won't treat you unfairly." Zenith Yin turned around and spoke to Han Li with a kindly face, fearing that Han Li wouldn't attempt his best.

But when Han Li heard those words, he felt a fierce chill run down his spine.

Chapter 480: Seizing the Treasure

No trace of Han Li's feelings were betrayed on his face. Instead, he approached the hole and took a deep glance. Han Li was astonished by the sight.

The hole wasn't as amazingly deep as he had imagined. It only dropped to about a hundred meters. With his abilities as a Core Formation cultivator, he could clearly see a flourishing ball of blinding blue flame. A black object could faintly be seen through the flickers of the blue flame. It seemed that this was the famous Heavenvoid Cauldron.

But when he leaned over the hole, he felt a bone-piercing cold spread throughout him. Even the White Rhino Emblem was unable to block most of the cold. He feared if he looked any longer, he would freeze over.

The brilliant blue flame at the bottom of the hole was actually releasing such a fantastical cold!

But after glancing at the blue flames for only a few moments more, his head started to spin. Aghast, he quickly turned his gaze away and collected himself.

As Zenith Yin stood by Han Li's side, he stared at the hole and slowly said, "How was it? That was the Celestial Ice Flame, a flame that roars with a cold beyond freezing. Let alone Core Formation cultivators, even us Nascent Soul cultivators don't dare to touch it. Even the slightest burn by the fire would cause a Nascent Soul

cultivator to easily perish by refinement. It is said that this flame isn't something that came from this world, and it is unknown how the ancient cultivators found such a thing."

'Even Nascent Soul cultivators would be refined?' Han Li's breath grew cold when he heard this. But soon after, his expression returned to normal.

If it weren't for this flame, then the Heavenvoid Cauldron would've been seized long ago!

"Although the Celestial Ice Flame is extremely deadly to us cultivators, there are a few things that are resistant to it. For example, the gold thread from the Gold Threaded Silkworm, and the spider thread of the Bloodjade Spider along with unusual exceptions such as my two fire pythons.

"It's about time for you to take out your Bloodjade Spider. Let us take a look at it." Zenith Yin gave an order with an assertive tone.

With Man Huzi and Qing Yi staring at Han Li from behind Zenith Yin, Han Li didn't delay any further. He clasped his hand on a spirit beast pouch on his waist, causing a streak of white light to fly out and circle around him before landing in front of him.

The light disappeared to reveal the Bloodjade Spider. When it saw so many strangers in front of it, it bared its fangs, and its eyes were brimming with hostility.

Man Huzi and the others didn't mind this in the slightest. They merely glanced at the spirit beast as if they were looking at treasure.

Just as Man Huzi glanced at Bloodjade Spider, his expression wavered and he said in a tone of amazement, "Tch tch! The Bloodjade Spider is quite large. It seemed to be a peak grade four demon beast on the verge of breaking through to grade five. It has a good chance of seizing the treasure!"

Zenith Yin also stared at the Bloodjade Spider with excitement and said, "Hehe! My junior disciple's Bloodjade Spider is inferior in strength to some wild breeds. But it is an optimal choice for the purpose of seizing the Heavenvoid Cauldron."

As acquiring the treasure was no longer a hopeless dream, Qing Yi appeared delighted. He said, "It is as Brother Wu says! This spider's grade is far higher than the grade two Gold Threaded Silkworms. Even with just one spider, the odds of success are far greater than theirs."

Seeing that there were no problems with the Heavenvoid Cauldron, Zenith Yin gave out his orders, "Let us start now! Any delay could bring unexpected events! Han Li have your spider spit out a net around the Heavenvoid Cauldron and have it pull it up. At the same time, I will have my two fire pythons assist your Bloodjade Spider."

"Yes!" Although he felt unwilling, Han Li could only agree.

Zenith Yin coldly glanced at Wu Chou and the Bone Sage and ordered, “You two, go down below the altar. As the Heavenvoid Cauldron grows closer to the surface, the Celestial Ice Fire will as well. You will be unable to withstand it given your cultivation. As for Junior Disciple Han Li, I will have to trouble Brother Qing to protect him.” He then turned to Qing Yi and smiled.

The old man agreed with a chuckle, “Well said. In order to to acquire the Heavenvoid Cauldron’s Heavenmend Pill, I cannot allow Young Friend Han to fall to any surprises.”

Wu Chou and the Bone Sage obediently descended from the altar and took several steps back.

Han Li inwardly sighed after seeing the covetous gazes of the three old devils and issued the command to his Bloodjade Spider. It immediately shot out a web of thread into the hole.

Having arrived this far, Han Li could only take it a step at a time. He hoped that when he acquired the treasure, Zenith Yin would find it too embarrassing to immediately cut ties with Han Li, giving him a moment of respite. This would hopefully allow enough time for the Bone Sage to deal with Zenith Yin and give Han Li an opportunity to turn his situation around. As for the Heavenvoid Cauldron, he didn’t particularly care whether or not he could take it out.

This was because he knew his situation wouldn’t change regardless of success or failure in acquiring the treasure.

As Han Li was inwardly planning out his countermeasures, Zenith Yin arrived at the opposite side of the hole from Han Li. He took out a pitch-black spirit beast pouch from his robes and turned the pouch upside down. With a flash of red light, two fifteen-meter-long, fire-red pythons appeared on the ground.

These two fantastical pythons had bright red scales the size of fingernails. Their heads were both imprinted with a wondrous design consisting of talisman characters. Their eyes were sparkling with red light as if they contained blazing flames.

After Zenith Yin's fire pythons unfolded themselves from their spiral resting position, he immediately flicked his sleeves at them, shooting two black medicinal pills at them. The two pythons swiftly caught them in their mouths and swallowed them.

"Go." Zenith Yin pointed towards the hole.

The two fire pythons slowly slivered towards the hole in a lazy manner.

When Zenith Yin saw this, he solemnly clutched his hands into an eccentric incantation gesture and mumbled a series of cryptic incantations, resulting in an astonishing scene. The fire python's bright red scales were stained black during the incantation, and they enthusiastically began to follow Zenith Yin's orders.

Peng! Peng! The two fire python's tails fiercely stabbed into the ground nearby the hole, cutting about a meter deep. They then dropped their upper halves into the hole and began to stretch out

as if they were boneless. Their tails held firm onto the ground. It seemed as if they had turned into two black-red ropes.

During Han Li's amazement, the ropes twisted for a moment. Zenith Yin appeared delighted by this and clutched his hands. He quickly shouted towards Han Li, "It's ready! They are biting on the Heavenvoid Cauldron. Quickly, have your spider draw it up. Although the fire pythons have consumed my medicine pills, they cannot withstand the Glacial Ice flames for long. We must succeed in one go!" A trace of malevolence was betrayed on Zenith Yin's face when he said this. Han Li inwardly snorted at the sight.

Han Li begrudgingly scorned in his mind, 'It seems quite possible I will lose my life if the treasure is successfully seized. Now I am even more willing to allow this to fail.'

But still, he forced himself to have the Bloodjade Spider start pulling up the cauldron. This was because Man Huzi and Qing Yi were eyeing his every move like tigers watching their prey. Were he to purposefully hold back, he wouldn't be able escape discovery from these two old cunning foxes.

Under Han Li's begrudging command, the white translucent thread immediately became taut. The bloodjade spider began to slowly move back. At that same moment, the black-red ropes began to twist and pull back.

With a series of dull rumblings, the platform started to sway. Blue light wildly dazzled from the hole, blinding Han Li. He was forced to turn his gaze away. As for the Bloodjade Spider, it ignored it and continued to pull with all its strength.

Upon seeing this, Qing Yi nervously muttered to himself, “Good, the Heavenvoid Cauldron is already swaying.”

It was clear that the Heavenvoid Cauldron was extremely heavy. Even with the Bloodjade Spider and two fire pythons exerting their full strength, they were only able to cause the Heavenvoid Cauldron to repeatedly sway . It seemed it wasn’t about to be lifted anytime soon.

Zenith Yin didn’t reveal the slightest impatience. Instead, he muttered to himself for a moment and puffed out two wisps of black smoke that entered the bodies of the fire pythons. He then turned to Man Huzi and quickly said, “Brother Man, I must trouble you to use the Berserking Technique on the Bloodjade Spider. My junior disciple lacks the magic power to fully use this technique.”

“Leave it to me.” Man Huzi replied without surprise. It seemed he had already anticipated this. He stared at the Bloodjade Spider and muttered quickly. He then opened his mouth, faintly revealing the red light within it.

Chapter 481: Return

“Pah!” Man Huzi loudly shouted, spitting out a beam of blood-red light towards the Bloodjade Spider. With a puff, the beam of light burst on contact, enveloping the spider in a large blood-red mist in an instant. The Bloodjade Spider hissed and became frantic as if it had been provoked.

When Han Li saw this, his heart flared with anger.

Upon hearing its name, Han Li was certain that the “Berserking Technique” was a secret Devil Dao cultivator technique that carried repercussions. These old devils had used the technique without even telling him or showing any consideration towards the aftereffects the Bloodjade Spider would suffer. It seemed they simply didn’t view a Core Formation cultivator to be worth considering! Although Han Li had already anticipated this, he couldn’t help but grimace when he was actually treated this way.

At the moment, the Bloodjade Spider had nearly absorbed the entirety of the blood-red mist. The spider’s original sparkling, translucent body had turned completely blood-red as if it were cut from a single piece of scarlet gemstone.

“This is...” Upon seeing this transformation, he immediately recalled the violet appearance of the Bloodjade Spider in the underground cave in the Heavenly South Region. It had the same color and intensity as the furious Bloodjade Spider he had seen back then.

When he worriedly scanned its mind, he sensed a crazed violence from it as if it had lost its intelligence.

Just as Han Li attempted to forcefully placate it in his fright, Man Huzi suddenly roared from his side, “What are you spacing out for? Quickly have your Bloodjade Spider start pulling. The duration of the Berserking Technique is limited.” He was fiercely glaring at Han Li.

Stifling his anger, Han Li had no choice but to command the Bloodjade Spider to resume pulling.

Fortunately, the Bloodjade Spider still obediently listened to his orders despite entering a berserk state. A blood-red light flickered from its green eyes as its pointed legs frantically scratched the ground before managing to gradually pull up its taut spider thread.

A series of even more intense trembles rocked the ground, soon followed by thunderous clangs ringing out from the hole.

Man Huzi and the others were delighted by these developments.

Blinding blue light suddenly bursted from the hole and reached over thirty meters above the altar.

Han Li felt his body grow cold for an instant before he grew warm once more. A barrier of brilliant azure light had protected him. Han Li was stunned for a moment before he realized that Qing Yi had enlarged his light barrier by several times and was

covering him under its protection.

The old man said with a solemn expression, “Be careful! A far harsher current of cold erupts in the instant that the Heavenvoid Cauldron is raised. It is unknown just how many treasure seeking cultivators have pitifully succumbed to the unexpected occurrence.”

After saying this to Han Li, Qing Yi’s gaze rigidly focused on the hole once more. He appeared nervous.

When Han Li heard this, his heart was shaken. Just how many had previously attempted to move the cauldron? How was it that they all failed?

Although his heart held doubts, Han Li knew that now was not the time to ask these questions. He could only recollect himself and look at how things were developing at the center of the altar.

It was obvious by now that the Heavenvoid Cauldron was extremely heavy. The full strength of these spirit beasts could only move it a sliver at a time. But even so, the blue light at the center of the altar grew brighter by the second.

Let alone Zenith Yin and the others, even Wu Chou and the Bone Sage down below were staring at the scene without blinking. But while Wu Chou had his hands tightened and wore an expression of excitement and greed, the Bone Sage’s eyes revealed a complicated expression containing both anticipation and hesitation.

There was only silence at the altar apart from the sound produced by the slow and gradual rise of the Heavenvoid Cauldron. Everyone was raptly gazing at the hole with held breath.

Han Li was the exception. He was worriedly staring at his Bloodjade Spider. In the end, he wouldn't have any claim to the Heavenvoid Cauldron. What mattered more was the Bloodjade Spider he had painstakingly raised.

He had made a startling discovery. The original milky-white color of the spider thread was now enveloped in a layer of faint blue radiance. Although this change was so faint it could be dismissed as a trick of the eyes, it was undoubtedly a change of its original color.

Just as Han Li was mulling over this change, he heard a sudden buzz from behind him. Despite being rather soft, it was particularly noticeable among the silence on the platform.

Han Li was initially shocked before he turned his head over with concealed delight.

It was the sound of the barrier being torn open at the entrance of the stone steps. Zenith Yin and the others had also clearly heard this sound.

With an unsightly expression, Man Huzi let out a rain of curses before patting the Beast storage pouch at his waist. A streak of yellow light shot out, revealing a yellow spotted panther.

Not only was its body several times larger than an ordinary panther, but there was also a third eye emerging from the top of its head. A flickering yellow glow could be faintly seen from its third eye.

A cold glint flickered from Qing Yi's eyes. He icily said, "Wan Tianming and the others have arrived. My Azure Thorn Bird and Fellow Daoist Wu's two demon corpses have already perished. They obviously aren't willing to allow us to seize the treasure and are coming back to attack us."

"We must delay them for as long as possible. The Heavenvoid Cauldron is already over halfway out. However, the attractive force on the cauldron will only grow heavier the closer it comes to the surface. It isn't something that can be pulled out in a short amount of time." Zenith Yin's face was icy, but he displayed no sign of panic. It seemed the return of the Righteous Dao cultivators was something he had long since anticipated.

"It is as Brother Wu says!" Qing Yi knew they were on the verge of a great battle and swiftly responded. With a flutter of his sleeves, a large flock of azure spheres rushed out. They were over a hundred Azure Thorn Birds.

Although these birds were only fist-sized, they had feathers and beaks of razor-sharp steel. They all silently floated above the old man, making for an impressive display.

As for Zenith Yin, he had his hands clutched in an incantation gesture. A pitch-black mist began to slowly exude from his body. As this devilish mist drifted through the air, fifteen dark-green

armored demon corpses appeared around him.

Man Huzi coolly glanced at the two other Core Formation cultivators in silence. Wu Chou hastily took a few steps towards the altar with a restless expression. As for the Bone Sage, his eyes swiveled several times, but he stood completely still. It was unknown what he intended.

Seeing that the Bone Sage hadn't moved, Han Li frowned for a moment before immediately relaxing his face. Several streaks of light had arrived before them at an amazing speed, appearing in front of the altar in only a fraction of a second.

The light disappeared to reveal the group of three Righteous Dao cultivators.

After Wan Tianming swept his gaze past the Bloodjade spider that was pulling up the Heavenvoid Cauldron along with the blue light wildly bursting out of the hole, he calmly said, "Good, very good!" The Devil Dao cultivators looked at each other, not knowing what he had meant by his words.

Man Huzi glared at him and retorted, "Good? I am obviously feeling quite good. But I'd feel even better if you hadn't come."

Wan Tianming indifferently said, "I also didn't want to come, but who would've thought that shortly after I left, this young fellow would take out a long extinct Bloodjade Spider. As such, how could I possibly just walk away?" After he said this, he moved his lips, releasing an odd low-pitched whistle.

Man Huzi and the others were startled. As they pondered what sinister plot their opponent was up to, Wan Tianming stood in place when there was a sudden flash of white light. Like a bolt of lightning, a blue mouse-like creature scuttled into his hand with amazing speed.

At that moment, the Sect Master of the Myriad Gates of Enlightenment silently glanced at the Devil Dao cultivators with a sneer.

“A Stoneshift Beast!” Upon seeing the beast, Qing Yi couldn’t help but shout out its name.

“Hehe! Had I not left this creature behind to monitor you, how could I have known the right time to come back? This Stoneshift Beast has no particularly remarkable abilities aside from its stealthy stone transformation. Even with your profound abilities, you couldn’t have possibly detected this creature. It seems I was correct to leave this contingency measure behind.”

Wan Tianming gently caressed the Stoneshift Beast in his hand and glanced at the Bloodjade Spider a moment more. He leisurely said, “Now, I will give you two choices. One is that I will kill the Bloodjade Spider and have the Heavenvoid Cauldron remain buried. The other is for our two sides to evenly split the treasure. This sect master can’t possibly allow you Devil Dao cultivators to monopolize the cauldron’s treasures.”

It seemed that Wan Tianming had made plans in advance and

didn't fear their refusal.

Chapter 482: The Battle Begins

“Split it evenly with you?” Zenith Yin frowned as if he were tempted by the thought. In Zenith Yin’s eyes, so long as he was able to take the portion from his in-name disciple, he wouldn’t be given too small a share, regardless of how the treasure was split.

But before Zenith Yin could further consider the matter, Man Huzi insolently laughed as he stood at the very front. “Evenly split the Heavenvoid Cauldron?! Wan Tianming, you sure can dream! You want to take food out of this lord’s mouth? First, let’s see just how sharp your claws are!”

Man Huzi then shouted and the huge panther that was crouching in front of him suddenly stood and roared. The beast’s third eye opened, shooting out a yellow beam of light towards Wan Tianming.

“Animal, you’re seeking death!” Wan Tianming furiously shouted.

He hadn’t anticipated that Man Huzi would launch an attack without giving his proposal even the slightest consideration. Regardless of how it could be seen, his side currently had the advantage due to the assistance of the Glacial Flood Dragon and the Phantom Tortoise.

Wan Tianming flusteredly responded by shooting out a beam of violet light from his hand to meet the yellow beam. In the instant the beams of light met, a burst of yellow radiance erupted.

With a bang, the violet light disappeared without a trace. Instead, a smoking white object fell from the air. Before anyone could clearly see what it was, it had already shattered to pieces. After carefully staring at the pieces, it was apparent that there were pieces of common stone. A majority of the people who saw this were stunned and filled with doubt.

When Wan Tianming saw this, his expression changed several times and the spirited look in his eyes disappeared. He shouted with disbelief, “An aberrant technique! Your Three Eyed Panther is a spirit beast variant!”

Upon hearing the words “spirit beast variant”, everyone on both sides appeared shocked.

Spirit beast variants and antiquity variants sounded somewhat the same, but the difference was actually as large as heaven and earth. “Antiquity variants” were remnants of a few uncommon spirit beasts that were left behind from ages long past. Due to changes of appearance and characteristics over the long passage of time, they became an entirely new species that only possessed a few of the characteristics of their predecessors.

However, these spirit beasts were extremely rare and difficult to find.

As for spirit beast variants, each one is an entirely unique existence. They were spirit beasts that have underwent unpredictable mutations for some unknown reason, resulting in

their capabilities being greatly changed. The quality of these variations all differed from one another, but each of these variants all had amazing abilities that exceeded what was capable of common magic techniques.

The ability to petrify a majority of magic tools or magic treasures was among the better known abilities.

This ability was quite incisive. If a Core Formation cultivator were to make use such an ability of their own spirit beast variant, they would be able to cleanly deal with four cultivators of their rank in a single breath. As the abilities of these spirit beast variants often caused tremors amidst the Scattered Star Seas, they became collectively known as “aberrant techniques”, distinguishing them from common magic techniques.

Originally, a Three Eyed Panther was only capable of shooting fire attribute attacks out of its third eye. But now, it was capable of shooting out a beam of light that was able to turn magic tools and treasures into stone. This was an ability that only a spirit beast could perform after a mutation.

Spirit beast variants were a rare existence that hardly ever occurred. In addition, the variations only appeared in spirit beasts at grade four and above. Ever since the existence of spirit beast variants became widely known in the Scattered Star Seas, no more than a dozen had appeared. And among those dozen, less than half of them possessed any particularly destructive abilities.

Even worse, spirit beast variants had come increasingly rare. It had been over a thousand years since the last spirit beast variation

had been seen. As such, spirit beast breeders no longer held any hopes that one of their beasts would become a variant. The thought had become nothing more than a fleeting daydream.

At that moment, Wan Tianming realized the reason Man Huzi had so bluntly refused the offer to split the treasure was because he had this to rely on. His Three Eyed Panther variant was fearsome enough to even the odds against both their Glacial Flood Dragon and Phantom Tortoise.

Having understood this, Wan Tianming's expression grew solemn, and he turned his gaze towards Zenith Yin and Layman Qing Yi. The two revealed both surprise and delight. It was clear that they had already decided to refuse his offer to split the Heavenvoid Cauldron.

Wan Tianming guessed correctly. Now that Zenith Yin knew that Man Huzi's Three Eyed Panther was a spirit beast variant, the thought of sharing had been thrown to the back of his head. As for Qing Yi, this towering figure of the Devil Dao was by no means a true layman of Buddhism. He would naturally be unwilling to split the treasure with the Righteous Dao cultivators if he could monopolize it.

Zenith Yin meaningfully exchanged a glance with Qing Yi before he started to spin in a circle. Countless strands of profound black Qi spread out around him. The many Heavenwide Corpses around him began to distort and then disappeared without a trace in a flash of black light.

Layman Qing Yi sent a voice transmission into Han Li's ear,

“Stand a bit farther back, and protect your life as best you can. We won’t be able to protect you in the coming fight.”

After this was said, the Azure Thorn Birds above his head received their orders. They released a chilling cry and shot towards the Righteous Dao cultivators as a swarm of azure arrows. The old man also threw out another the swarm of birds.

Seeing the Devil Dao cultivators rush to act, Wan Tianming responded without restraint. Even if Man Huzi’s Spirit Beast Variant was somewhat troublesome, he had nothing to fear from it. In the end a vicious spirit beast variant is no more than a mere beast.

Besides, he clearly understood that while this aberrant technique could petrify objects, it didn’t have much effect on a cultivator’s body. So long as he was somewhat careful and prevented his magic treasures from being struck by the yellow light, the spirit beast could be dealt with.

With that thought, Wan Tianming snorted and quickly shouted, “Move!”

With that said, he released his white Glacial Flood Dragon and struck his palms against his chest, causing a purple flame to wildly erupt from his body. In the next instant, he was enveloped in purple flames and was charging down towards Man Huzi from the sky.

When Tian Wuzi saw this, he quickly called out to the Phantom

Tortoise and struck the its shell without any hesitation. An ominous glint suddenly flickered from the huge tortoise's small eyes. It slowly opened its mouth, spouting out a white icy mist in overwhelming quantity, sending a raging snowstorm in the direction of the incoming Azure Thorn Birds.

Unwilling to be outmatched, the Azure Thorn Birds opened their sharp beaks in response. Slim streaks of azure flame successively shot out, rapidly merging into a huge beam of azure flame. Both the azure flame and the icy mist scattered upon impact as if they were evenly matched at the moment.

The old, dark and thin farmer's actions were particularly strange. He suddenly flipped his hand in a stiff manner, summoning a glistening emerald willow branch to appear between his fingers. With a slight wave of his branch, circles of countless green phantasms of itself flew off, densely filling up an area of over forty meters turning into a sea of verdant green.

But with two flickers of black light, two armored demon corpses suddenly appeared among the green light phantasms. The green threads around them tightly bound the several Heavenwide Corpses as if the threads were alive.

These demon corpses possessed monstrous strength, but in the bindings of the green thread, they were powerless. Unable to break free from their bindings, the two corpses howled as they struggled in vain.

When Zenith Yin saw this, his face grew icy. In a mere second, he had turned his body into a large black cloud, rapidly shooting

towards the sky. As each individual Heavenwide Corpse was quite difficult to refine, he was unwilling to abandon them lightly. And since his opponent was obviously using a wood attribute technique, his Heavenwide Corpsefire would be doubly effective at half the effort!

Seeing that the battle between the Nascent Soul cultivators was unfolding, Han Li didn't need any further instructions before deciding to take over ten steps back.

Although he clearly understood that even taking a hundred steps back wouldn't make a difference, Han Li subconsciously wished to be further away. If the Righteous Dao cultivators changed their minds and didn't wish to acquire the Heavenvoid Cauldron, they might aim to exterminate the master of the Bloodjade Spider. In that case, his death would be certain! He couldn't possibly trust that Man Huzi and the others would arrive in time to save him. After all, to a Nascent Soul cultivator, travelling any distance on the stone platform would only take an instant.

At this moment, his mind suddenly wandered to the Bone Sage. Zenith Yin was currently tangled up in a fight against the other Nascent Soul cultivators, providing a good opportunity for the Bone Sage to ambush him. Would he prioritize settling his own score and taking revenge, or would he decide to be patient and refuse to provide aid to the Righteous Dao?

With that thought, Han Li couldn't help but look in the direction of the Bone Sage who stood below the altar.

At that moment, the Bone Sage was expressionlessly watching

the battle unfold. His face was completely devoid of any emotion, preventing Han Li from reading him in the slightest.

‘Old fox!’ Han Li couldn’t help but gloomily curse at him in his mind.

Chapter 483: Transformed Treasure

Still unsure of the Bone Sage's intentions, Han Li's gaze moved towards his nearby Bloodjade Spider.

The red light in the spider's body began to shine even more brilliantly and, trembling ever so slightly, it pulled its thread back.

In that moment, the milky white spider web sparkled with a faint, yet chilling blue light. The light traveled up the web until it collided with the Bloodjade Spider's own red light and immediately dissipated into specks of white light. It couldn't make even the slightest contact with the Bloodjade Spider's body.

Han Li frowned. There was no doubt this strange light had something to do with the Celestial Ice Flame. Nor was it any wonder why those eccentrics wouldn't dare assist the spirit beast in acquiring the treasure. They were fearful of this blue light.

But just as Han Li finished this thought, he heard the sound of Man Huzi laughing as an explosion went off in the sky. The spectacle brought Han Li's attention back to the battle at hand.

He watched as Man Huzi's body grew thirteen meters in size. The clothes on the upper half of his body disappeared to reveal the densely packed golden scales that lined his body. They radiated brightly to the point where they can't be directly seen. But what was even more strange were the several silver rings of light rotating around his huge body.

The silver rings seemed illusionary and fluttered erratically, but they were very much capable of preventing Wan Tianming's purple flame dragons from approaching Man Huzi, always blocking their every advance. Although Man Huzi proclaimed that his Heavenbearing Devil Arts was ranked first in the Scattered Star Seas, even he was unwilling to foolishly take on Wan Tianming's true flames with this technique alone.

In addition to the change from Heavenbearing Devil's transformation, Man Huzi was also now wearing a malicious looking pair of dull, pitch-black gloves that was covered in inch-long needles.

Man Huzi brandished his hands and starting punching the air, sending out huge golden fists with every strike—all aimed at the huge purple draconic sword that Wan Tianming had summoned summoned earlier . Every strike knocked the huge sword back several.

A malicious expression appeared on Wan Tianming's face as he floated in midair nearby. He ordered two of his purple flame dragons to fly through the skies and look for a weak point in the silver rings. He hoped to corner Man Huzi in a single move.

As for Layman Qing Yi and Tian Wuzi, they were the sort to treasure their lives above all else. They kept a large gap between themselves as they fought. Qing Yi was continuously issuing orders to his Azure Thorn Bird as he attacked with magic treasures, while Tian Wuzi relied on the Phantom Tortoise and his short, sparkling club to form an impenetrable defense. The two were calmly battling as if they were they were exchanging pointers.

The most lively battle was between Zenith Yin and the dark, skinny old farmer. Their battle took place over a large area where both ghostly wails and phoenix cries interweaved amongst each other. Green silhouettes flickered within a huge vortex of black Qi. The only images that could be seen from the outside was the occasional flicker of a Heavenwide Corpse or the wild whips of huge green vines skirting the edge of the black mist.

As for the heavily valued Three Eyed Panther variant, it was currently tangling with the white Glacial Flood Dragon.

The dragon was clearly at a disadvantage; the panther's aberrant technique putting heavy pressure upon him. The white, icy mist that it spouted immediately turned into chunks of stone upon contact with the yellow light, leaving the panther completely untouched. However, it was still able to tie down the leopard, preventing it from attacking the three Devil Dao cultivators. But under the current circumstances, the dragon wouldn't be able to last for much longer.

As Han Li observed the battle, a strange thought popped into his mind.

While their battle was quite lively with magic treasures constantly fluttering about and secret techniques being unleashed without restraint, he still felt the absence of the desperate struggle that comes with a battle of life and death. It was as though they were not fighting for their lives, but merely sparring instead. Could it be that all battles between Nascent Soul cultivators were all like this?

After finishing his thought, he took another look at the Bone Sage.

The Bone Sage's blank face now had a trace of a sneer. But after sensing Han Li's gaze, his face became blank once more and returned to its normal, unreadable state.

Han Li's heart trembled and felt as though he were on the verge of realizing something. But before he could further pursue the thought, a huge explosion erupted from the altar's hole, followed by deafening clangs.

Greatly startled, Han Li turned to face the hole, readying his guard.

He watched as a pulsating blue light emerged from the hole, before violently exploding into a red flame as the cry of a dragon echoed from within. The fiery light quickly wrapped itself around the altar before stopping in midair and merging into the form of a huge two-headed wolf. Its entire body was made of blazing flame. The beast took one look at the scene before it immediately fled.

Upon seeing this, both sides stopped fighting, dumbfounded. The closest to it, Layman Qing Yi, immediately slapped the top of his head. An azure hand of light shot out from his head, sweeping towards the flame wolf.

When Wan Tianming saw this, he anxiously shouted, "Don't you dare! That treasure is mine!" He spun his body, separating himself

into two identical selves which both flared with purple light as they chased after the huge hand.

Having finally collected themselves, the others hastily used their abilities and launched themselves after the wolf, producing a streaks of multi-colored lights all focused on a single point.

The others were obviously a step behind Qing Yi and Wan Tianming. Qing Yi's large azure hand was not only fast, but it also had a head start. It had arrived at the flame wolf first and was just about to grab it.

Everyone was certain that Qing Yi would capture it successfully, except for the wolf that was. It rocked its heads back and forth, causing a red and yellow barrier of light to appear and wrap around its body. When the hand collided with the barrier, it was repelled with a muffled bang.

At first Qing Yi was shocked, but soon a smile had emerged on his face. Just as the azure hand flourished with light and tightened its grip, Wan Tianming's purple light appeared right behind. In that instant, he had quickly changed his target. The streaks of light merged into a purple fire dragon and fiercely attacked the large hand.

When Layman Qing Yi saw this, he inwardly rained curses upon Wan Tianming's treachery! The hand was a profound transformation of his spiritual sense. Though it was an easy ability to use, its power certainly wasn't weak. Even so, he didn't dare take a direct hit from a flame dragon created by the Heavensifting True Arts.

Even if he were able to acquire the treasure, his spiritual sense would suffer heavy damage. He couldn't afford to make such a costly trade! With no better option, the azure hand suddenly stopped grabbing at the flame wolf and turned to block Wan Tianming's purple flame dragon, resulting a burst of azure light and purple flames.

In that instant, the others had overtaken them. They surrounded the flame wolf and instead of attacking it, they all began to attack each other.

These attacks were far more vicious and ruthless than before. Secret techniques were quickly cast in succession, tangling everyone down and rendering them incapable of paying the flame wolf any heed.

The flame wolf, appearing to be quite intelligent, seemed to have realized the fearsomeness of the Nascent Soul eccentrics. It quickly darted out from underneath them and charged in the direction of the three Core Formation cultivators.

Initially, Han Li was dumbstruck by this, but soon he recollected himself.

The two headed flame wolf was certain to be a transformed treasure of the Heavenvoid Cauldron. While he didn't know how it was able to break out before the Heavenvoid Cauldron was entirely seized, it was undoubtedly a rare item from its mobile transformation and independant acts of resistance.

Upon seeing the treasure wolf charge towards them, Han Li reacted near instantaneously, patting his storage pouch. A white streak of Qi suddenly flew out and appeared in his grasp, revealing an ancient flower basket.

But before Han Li could act, two huge pythons made of black Qi rushed to constrict the flame wolf. They managed to wrap themselves around its body several times, restraining it.

Han Li inwardly cursed and glanced at the side to see Wu Chou forming an incantation seal with a proud expression. It seems the huge black pythons were created with the Profound Yin Arts.

Han Li exposed slight vexation on his face. He couldn't help but hesitantly consider whether or not he should attack him for the treasure. After all, the treasure hadn't yet been truly acquired. However, this would undoubtedly enrage Grandmaster Zenith Yin, guaranteeing that Han Li would be disposed off after the Heavenvoid Cauldron was acquired. It simply wasn't worth the consequences.

These thoughts quickly rushed through his mind, but, before he could even finish his contemplations, the Bone Sage ruthlessly launched an attack at the flame wolf.

A cold glint flickered through the Bone Sage's eyes. He silently opened his mouth and spat out a ray of green light. In an instant, the green light brightly flourished, transforming into a huge emerald-green net that ensnared both the black python and the

flame wolf.

Chapter 484: Battling Over Treasure

Wu Chou hadn't anticipated that the taciturn Bone Sage would silently compete with him for the treasure. With a savage expression, he furiously shouted, "You dare to fight this young island lord over treasure?"

The Bone Sage sneered and spoke with unconcealed derision, "Funny. Was this treasure created by your clan? Why can't I contend for it?"

Wu Chou flew into a fit of rage out of embarrassment, but something soon came to mind and he foully grimaced. Instead of further refuting, he clasped his hand into an incarnation gesture, forcefully causing the black pythons to exert more strength.

It seemed Wu Chou understood that since the Bone Sage was being supported by Man Huzi, who Zenith Yin held in fear, he couldn't use his grandfather's status to subdue him.

Wu Chou's actions caused the Bone Sage to sneer. Without speaking further, he pointed at the green web, causing its light to brightly flourish as its threads grew thicker and tightened.

Wu Chou's and the Bone Sage's techniques had both restrained the wolf, but despite its light barrier having decreased several times in size, it grew increasingly firm and bright. The unscathed flame wolf gazed at the two of them as they remained at a standstill.

The Nascent Soul cultivators that were still fighting in the sky were all caught by surprise. None of them had expected that the treasure would run towards the Core Formation cultivators. The Righteous Dao cultivators grew increasingly anxious and wished to break off from the battle to seize the treasure. However, the eccentrics of the Devil Dao were largely unbothered.

Regardless of how you looked at it, their side was going to acquire the treasure. With this in mind, they were happy to tie down the Righteous Dao cultivators and allow their juniors to safely secure the treasure. Besides, Man Huzi and Zenith Yin both felt that they had a high chance of acquiring the treasure for themselves.

Wu Chou had been given many treasures by Zenith Yin, and he also used the Profound Yin Devilish Art, one of the best cultivations arts in the Scattered Star Seas. As such, Zenith Yin felt confident that Wu Chou would be able to wrest away the treasure from the Bone Sage who only appeared to be an early Core Formation cultivator. Man Huzi, knowing the Bone Sage's true identity, held far more confidence in acquiring it than Zenith Yin did. Qing Yi could only look at the circumstances with a trace of sadness. After hesitating for only a moment, he decided to tangle with Tian Wuzi and keep him occupied.

At that moment, the sole person near the altar was Han Li, and he didn't feel calm or confident in the slightest. In fact, he felt cold sweat running down his his back. He had instinctively taken out the ancient flower basket a moment ago due to the fact it was the most suitable for seizing treasures.

But when he saw the Bone Sage move to take the treasure, he

instantly recalled something significant. His ancient flower basket treasure was something he had acquired from the ugly man that was watching over the Bone Sage's prison. If he were to take it out then wouldn't he be informing Zenith Yin that he had released the Bone Sage?

This was what had caused Han Li to break out in a cold sweat. Joining the competition to seize the treasure was now the last thing on his mind! Rather, his mind was chaotically filled with all sorts of distracting thoughts, while he did his utmost to come up with an appropriate solution to deal with Zenith Yin.

But in the next moment, Han Li felt amazed. He had clearly felt Zenith Yin's gaze sweep past the flower basket and not react in the slightest.

Han Li suddenly came to a delighted realization. The ancient flower basket wasn't something that Zenith Yin had given to the ugly man. Furthermore, it wasn't something that he even knew the ugly man had possessed. Having come to this conclusion, Han Li felt greatly relieved.

Han Li had guessed correctly! That ugly man had stood guard at the Bone Sage's island for a very long time, and had heard of the ancient flower basket during that time and had left to retrieve it. Although he managed to smoothly acquire the treasure, Han Li's party had already surrounded the Bone Sage's formation and were just about to destroy it. This frightened the ugly man into a furious rage, but he ultimately ended up dying to Han Li's Bamboo Cloudswarm Swords, allowing Han Li to acquire the flower basket as spoils.

Having recovered his calm, Han Li glanced at Wu Chou and the Bone Sage struggling over the fire wolf. He thought to himself, 'You're quite in luck, old devil. Had Zenith Yin discovered this matter, I would have dragged you down with me. Don't think that I'll leave you unscathed!'

Another round of heavy, thunderous clangs rang out from the hole.

Having gone through this before, the Nascent Soul cultivators slowed their hands and glanced at one another. No one knew who moved first as they all blurred and appeared in the direction of the altar's hole.

At that moment, the Heavenvoid Cauldron was close to the surface. The Nascent Soul cultivators were all forced to block the fantastical cold it had released, each making full use of their respective techniques and defensive treasures. While these actions produced flashes of wondrous light, both sides remained cautious as they vigilantly watched one another.

At that moment, Zenith Yin was extremely vexed.

His original plan had been to fend off the Righteous Dao and seize all of the treasures in one go. Then they would split the treasures in agreement. But who could've thought that as the Heavenvoid Cauldron neared the surface the ancient treasures would fly out on their own. In this manner, the acquisition of treasure was entirely a matter of skill.

After all, regardless of who seizes the treasure, it was impossible to ask them to hand it over to others as they had been acquired through battle. This would render their original agreement on how to split the treasures null and void.

Zenith Yin's eyes furiously looked around, wishing to see if there was a way he could acquire more treasures. But just as these thoughts appeared in his mind, a deafening screech was heard followed by two sounds of rustling wind. A streak of red and a streak of white radiance shot out of the blue flame at the center.

The six Nascent Soul cultivators were all quite close to the hole, and they all acted nearly simultaneously, using their secret techniques to fight for control.

Wan Tianming was contending for the yellow light against Zenith Yin and Qing Yi. As a result, Wan Tianming ordered a purple flame dragon to chase after the yellow light. Simultaneously, he opened his mouth with a strange expression appearing on his face, directly shooting out two sparkling purple pearls towards Zenith Yin and Qing Yi.

“True Heavensifting Mines!” When Zenith Yin saw the unremarkable pearls, he shouted as if they were vipers.

The two didn't dare to use magic treasures to block them. They quickly dodged out of the way, but by then, the purple flame dragon had swallowed the yellow light and was returning to Wan Tianming.

Wan Tianming excitedly clasped the yellow light and twisted his hands, revealing the ancient treasure's original appearance, a four pointed ornament. From the flickering talisman characters that flickered on its surface and its spiritual Qi fluctuations, one could tell the treasure was outstanding.

As for the two purple beads, they shot about ten meters away before they softly burst and disappeared without a trace.

When Zenith Yin and Qing Yi saw this, their complexions turned ashen as they watched Wan Tianming fiddling with the jade ornament.

“What a truly great sect master of the Righteous Dao! To think he would use false mines to deceive us!” Zenith Yin uttered each word through gritted teeth.

Qing Yi's face appeared just as gastly as he chillingly stared at Wan Tianming.

Wan Tianming sneered and returned their insults, “Who would've thought that these long famed cultivators, who even weren't able to see whether or not my True Heavensifting Mines were actually real, would be able to so shamelessly say those things in front of this Sect Master? Could it be that you didn't know that I would only use the True Heavensifting Mines during a matter of life or death? They're hardly appropriate to use in a fight over treasures. As I must produce them by harming my own cultivation, why would I be so wasteful? But of course, if you two Fellow

Daoists wish to witness their true might, I am willing to make the exception.” Wan Tianming softly clasped his hands. With a flash of purple light, the jade ornament could no longer be seen, instead replaced by a purple pearl that looked exactly the same as the ones from before.

Zenith Yin and Qing Yi’s expressions changed before they glanced at each other with gloomy expressions as if they were both uncertain of his intentions.

At that moment, Man Huzi shrugged off a blow from the dark old farmer and Tian Wuzi with the overbearing defense of his Heavenbearing Devil Arts and managed to forcefully capture the white light. It was revealed to be a sparkling ancient coin.

When Zenith Yin saw this, his face became even more unsightly.

“Yi!” At that moment, Qing Yi shouted out as if he were amazed. Zenith Yin couldn’t help but turn his gaze over, revealing a similar expression of astonishment.

At that very moment, Han Li was below the altar carefully examining a red-yellow Ruyi scepter in hand. It was finely carved with two lifelike carvings of wolf heads on each end.

It seemed that this was the ancient treasure that had transformed into the two headed flame wolf. Not far from him, Wu Chou and the Bone Sage were impotently gazing at Han Li with resentful expressions. A trace of confusion flickered from Zenith Yin’s eyes and he grew silent. He indeed felt quite shocked!

The treasure hadn't fallen into the hands of Zenith Yin or Wu Chou, but rather to Han Li, who hadn't displayed the slightest intent to act from the very start.

Chapter 485: Freezing Over

As the Nascent Soul cultivators clashed, Wu Chou and the Bone Sage experienced a great surprise while they suppressed the flame wolf.

With a growl, the two heads of the wolf warped together, transforming it into a huge, horned silver-furred wolf.

It then proceeded to lower its head and fiercely shot a burst of silver light from its horn.

Although the burst of light was only half a foot long, it released a piercing wail upon leaving the horn. In the blink of an eye, a large hole was now gaping in the body of the black python and the net had been dissolved.

The green net immediately turned into smoke upon touching the silver light and disappeared without a trace.

When Wu Chou and Zenith Yin saw this, they were shocked.

Wu Chou hastily made an incantation seal and pointed, shooting a black light towards the extinguished black python. The large hole in it immediately started to close while emitting sparks of faint light, stabilizing the python's body. As for the Bone Sage, after a brief moment of astonishment, he stared at the huge silver wolf as if he had thought of something. He hesitated for a moment before opening his mouth with a solemn expression, and spat out a dark green knife. The knife was only several inches long and handleless.

From a glance at the size of its increasing radiance, one could tell it was abnormal.

Han Li's heart stirred and he couldn't help but take another look at the magic treasure. If he wasn't mistaken, the knife was a transformed version of the Bone Sage's Gold Lightning Bamboo Arrow. He was merely using a magic technique to conceal its original form.

Could it be that the Bone Sage had gone mad? Zenith Yin was in the sky and he still dared to use his magic treasure. Zenith Yin surely must've used this treasure to plot against him long ago. Although the Bone Sage managed to conceal its brilliance, it was unable to escape the notice of Han Li, who had refined his own magic treasure from Gold Lightning Bamboo. It was far too bold of an action.

Han Li began to hesitate and had second thoughts, 'Could it be that the silver wolf is so exceptional that the old devil is willing to take such a huge risk to claim it?'

In that instant, the huge silver wolf suddenly shrunk in size and turned into a foot tall miniature in the blink of an eye. Then with a flash of silver light, it flew towards the altar's hole in a blur, breaking away from Wu Chou and the Bone Sage.

When the Bone Sage saw this, he immediately threw out his knife, shooting out a green streak. With a resounding bang, the small knife knocked away the silver wolf, but it didn't receive any damage from the impact.

As it just so happened, the silver wolf was knocked in the direction of Han Li. With such a fine gift knocking at his door, Han Li instantly threw any apprehensions he had to the back of his mind and threw his flower basket towards the silver wolf. Fearing that this treasure wouldn't be enough to capture the wolf, Han Li patted his storage pouch with his other hand, tossing the a chain of five copper bands after the wolf as well. He blew a breath of Azure Qi onto the chain of copper bands, causing it to flash with rainbow light and disappear without a trace.

Soon after, a clear ring suddenly sounded out. Before the silver wolf could dart away again, the five copper bands suddenly appeared around its limbs and head. Following several flickers of radiance, it crashed to the ground like a shot bird.

As for the flower basket, it had transformed into white mist and was already in pursuit of the wolf. In a second, it had caught up to the wolf and enveloped it. With a whistle from Han Li, it flew back into his hand and returned to its original form.

Having just recovered their magic treasures, the Bone Sage and Wu Chou gazed at Han Li in astonishment. Their expressions displayed complete disbelief.

Wu Chou was the first to awake and immediately wore a flustered, embarrassed expression. This was far beyond his expectations! He had originally thought that acquiring this ownerless treasure would be an easy matter with his Profound Yin Arts. He hadn't expected that the Bone Sage would contend with him for the treasure before either realized that the treasure itself

was quite difficult to capture. Just as he was about to use another magic treasure, the wolf had been easily captured by Han Li, leaving Wu Chou in a hapless state of miserable, impotent fury.

The Bone Sage wore an odd expression when he came to his senses. Although he soon returned to being expressionless, Han Li caught a glimpse of anger from his eyes. In addition, the old devil felt somewhat baffled when he saw the copper bands suddenly appear on the silver wolf's body.

Han Li didn't have the time to muse over the Bone Sage's expressions. Instead, he excitedly glanced into the flower basket.

The copper bands seemed to be the bane of the silver wolf. They tightly restrained it, preventing it from moving in the slightest and binding it so that only its small head could be seen. It appeared rather pitiful.

Han Li chuckled and lightly rubbed the wolf's head without a second thought. His hand then shined with azure light and completely enveloped it. Soon, the silver wolf's body weakened before it eventually faded away to a jade scepter.

Just as Han Li had acquired the scepter with delight, Qing Yi and Zenith Yin looked at the scene with astonishment, having just lost their treasure to Wan Tianming.

Zenith Yin inwardly frowned. He couldn't do anything about it now as he was facing such a great adversary as Wan Tianming. Moreover, there was no problem with giving Han Li possession of

the treasure for now. After all, how could a junior possibly keep such an valuable ancient treasure that possessed its own illusory body. After this was all over, he would naturally have Han Li sincerely give it to his master.

Having settled his thoughts, Zenith Yin turned his attention back to Wan Tianming. The Heavensifting Mine was a Nascent Soul weapon of rarely seen ferocity. He was forced to be particularly focused when facing it.

But unfortunately, no action had been taken in the end. The stone platform suddenly shuddered with astonishing intensity as if it were about to cave in.

At that moment, a sliver of blue flame had finally reached beyond the hole.

Although only a small bit of the flame was exposed, in that same instant, a magnificent blue light blossomed, permeating throughout the entire stone platform. With the sounds of light crackling, a layer of blue frost also began to quickly spread across the ground.

Frightened, Han Li instantly reacted, shooting into the air. The Bone Sage had also acted quickly, flying into the air at nearly the same time as Han Li

However, Wu Chou hesitated for a moment and in that mere moment, the blue frost had already spread over his feet. The Profound Yin Qi hovering around his body was unable to protect

him in the slightest. At that moment, Wu Chou became fearful and promptly wished to fly, but his feet were already frozen to the ground and the frost continued to spread. Wu Chou yelled in fright as he watched the frost cover his feet, and spread up from his lower leg.

As Han Li and the Bone Sage watched this from up above, they couldn't help but glance at each other with horror.

Just as Wu Chou was about to turn into an ice sculpture by the blue frost, a thin line of black light abruptly shot down from the sky. It struck Wu Chou's body, melting away the blue frost in a blaze of black fire and blue smoke.

Wu Chou rejoiced. He hastily flew to the skies with an expression of salvation upon regaining his freedom.

At that moment, he heard a cold snort transmitted to his ear followed by an irritated voice, "Be careful. Next time, I might not have the chance to save you."

His survival had been the result of Zenith Yin's actions. He had used his Heavenvoid Corpsefire to save Wu Chou from the sky.

At that moment, the eccentrics of both sides stared at the blue flames coming from the hole without blinking. Each of them had varying expressions of interest, greed and even nervousness.

Zenith Yin's recent rescue of Wu Chou had been but a casual

action. He hadn't even turned his head when he spoke to him. He simply licked his lips and gazed at the altar's hole with a feverish expression.

The rank one hidden treasure for countless years in the Scattered Star Seas, the Heavenvoid Cauldron, was about to emerge in the presence of these Nascent Soul cultivators at that very moment. Even the gloomy Zenith Yin and the other expressionless eccentrics couldn't help but have their attention captured by the emerging blue flames. It was no wonder why Zenith Yin had spoken to Wu Chou with such an irritated tone after he rescued him.

As the Bloodjade Spider and the fire pythons had been trembling from exhaustion for a while now, the eccentrics watched them from the sky with worry. However, none of them dared to assist the beasts in the slightest since the hole's surroundings had already become a world of blue light. While the red lights emitting from the spirit beasts' bodies were able to repel the chilling light, the eccentrics were both unwilling and incapable of descending to assist the three spirit beasts.

As for the Core Formation cultivators, they had already distanced themselves a hundred meters from the hole and were watching the spectacle from a distance.

Chapter 486: Incarnation Talisman

At this crucial moment, Man Huzi raised his head and suddenly stared at a certain area. With an icy face, he loudly shouted, “Who is sneaking around over there? How about you get lost!” He then sent a punch that shook his beard, sending out a three meter large golden hand to grab at the air.

A muffled peng sounded out, revealing a barrier of azure light. The light barrier forcibly stopped the golden hand’s approach, but it revealed the white silhouette within.

“It’s you!?”

“Star Palace?!”

Several shouts came from the eccentrics of both the Devil and Righteous Dao, and their expressions vastly changed.

Zenith Yin’s expression grew unsightly, and he rushed to question them, “Star Palace enforcement elder, when did you sneak up on us? Didn’t you claim to not intend to enter the Inner Halls?”

The white clothed elder didn’t respond to Zenith Yin and slowly addressed Man Huzi instead, “Sigh! My luck is truly bad. I didn’t expect that the Heavenvoid Cauldron’s emergence would cause such a great disturbance that I would have to use a technique to defend against its icy Qi, leaving me to be discovered by Brother Man. It seems Fellow Daoist Man possesses the highest cultivation out of all of you.” His face remained completely calm for someone

that had been lying in concealment.

Zenith Yin grew furious, but he didn't dare to rashly act against someone from the Star Palace.

As for the Righteous Dao cultivators, it seemed they also had their own misgivings. They all stared at the Star Palace elder in a moment of silence.

“Wait, isn't there another person?! Han Li, be careful! The Bloodjade Spider!”

Ever since the Star Palace elder had appeared, Qing Yi had started muttering to himself. After hearing the Star Palace elder's words, he became extremely suspicious. With some further thought, he suddenly recalled something and hastily shouted. When Han Li heard this from a distance, he was stunned.

Before he realized what was going on, two streaks of burning white light shot out from the other side of the altar. Each one cut through the air towards Han Li and the Bloodjade Spider with a chilling whistle. Afterwards, a white-clothed old man appeared where the attacks had been launched from.

Han Li's complexion paled.

“Fast, too fast!” This was the single thought that filled Han Li's mind as he saw the white light flash towards him. He did the only thing he could possibly do in that instant; he raised the jade

scepter with both hands and used it to block his chest as best he could.

Peng! Han Li felt a huge impact from his hands before nearly losing all sensation; he fell from the sky, completely oblivious apart from a burning sensation from his chest along with the faint sounds of wind and furious shouting as he fell from the sky.

Before Han Li could stop his fall, he felt pain on the back of his body. His body had collapsed upon a barrier of light that was slowly rising.

“Yi!” A cry of disbelief came from the Star Palace elder that had attacked him. He felt surprised that he hadn’t managed to execute a weakling like Han Li in a single strike.

Since his magic treasure, the Piercing Sun Swords, failed to cleave Han Li at such a short distance, Han Li must’ve been wearing a top grade protective treasure. However, this was no matter as his other sword had struck true. With that thought, he turned his gaze to the altar.

The Bloodjade Spider had been cleaved into two halves. Its blood flowed into the ground, and the small portion of the revealed Celestial Ice Flame had silently sunk back into the hole.

The two remaining fire pythons completely lacked the strength to further pull up the Heavenvoid Cauldron.

Having seen this, the white-clothed elder was completely satisfied and recalled his two flying swords with a wave of his hand. He then put them away and revealed a strange smile towards the ashen faces of the Righteous and Devil Dao Nascent Soul cultivators.

Because these Nascent Soul cultivators had their attention drawn to the other Star Palace elder, they were unable to respond to the sneak attack on Han Li and Bloodjade Spider. As they had seen the Bloodjade Spider executed before their very eyes, they each wore an expression of fury and their eyes burned with rage.

Man Huzi didn't have any qualms against taking action. He loudly rained curses on them and clapped his hand together, causing golden light to burst from his body.

But before Man Huzi could do anything else, the Star Palace elder that had earlier attacked started to fade into specks of white light, causing him to disappear without a trace. All that had remained was a faint gold talisman that floated to the floor. A similar scene occurred with the other white clothed elder. He faded away into specks of light with a smile on his face, leaving behind a similar golden talisman.

Man Huzi quickly suppressed the fury on his face and muttered to himself with a flickering expression, "The Star Palace's Incarnation Talisman! So they flaunted their wealth instead of having their true bodies come! They did this to prevent us from being able to settle our debt with them."

As for the others, they each helplessly watched the golden

talismans fall to the ground with unsightly expressions before the talismans combusted and turned to ash.

In a quiet corner of the fifth floor in the Inner Halls, two white-clothed were sitting down cross-legged in the dark; their eyes were closed. One of them slowly spoke with a voice containing slight happiness, “Fortunately, we followed them. Otherwise, the Heavenvoid Cauldron would’ve fallen into their hands.”

“However, our incarnations had been discovered a bit too early. Else, we could’ve taken action as they fought over the Heavenvoid Cauldron. They would have been too distracted with one another to prevent us from making off with the treasure!” The other old man spoke somewhat gloomily with a tone of slight regret.

“Hehe! We had best not be too greedy. It was the optimal opportunity to sabotage the Righteous and Devilish Dao’s attempts to acquire the treasure, and we achieved a decent result. However, we merely delayed the crisis for this occasion. The next opening of Heavenvoid Hall will still prove to be a problem.”

The gloomy voice said without care, “That’s not wrong, but we might not be there to see the day. I did wish to see whether or not the Heavenmend Pill was as miraculous as they had said, able to make up for the deficiencies of impure spiritual roots or refine new Heavenly Spiritual Roots. It is quite unimaginable.”

“That is a pity! However, we’ve nearly reached our end. It would simply be too much of a waste for us to use it. Though funnily enough, it was unknown who said it first, but many Nascent Soul eccentric had completely taken the rumors to heart! That it was

capable of both extending one's life as well as breaking through the bottleneck of the Nascent Soul Stage! If these miracles were true, the Archsaint of the Six Paths as well as the Mad Matron would've definitely arrived. But unfortunately, the Heavenmend Pill is only capable of massively increasing the chances for a Core formation cultivator to condense a Nascent Soul. It's just that refining the pill is truly too difficult." The first voice said with a mocking tone.

"Humph! Are Core Formation cultivators capable enough to come here? Besides, those Nascent Soul cultivators were the same as us. They spent many years cultivating but found themselves unable to advance, and they placed their complete hopes on acquiring the famed Heavenmend Pill. That is at least understandable. Were we still young, we would've definitely made every attempt to acquire such a pill. It would even constantly be on our minds!" After this was said, the other voice kept silent as if in tacit agreement.

"Let us set off! We had best prevent them from trying to find us in their rage. That would prove quite troublesome. They must be absolutely furious!" With that said, the darkness became silent once more as if no one had been there.

Their guess had not been wrong. The Righteous and Devilish Dao cultivators were fuming. Their eyes held no spirit and they felt rather depressed. However, they were all the cunning sort and were able to quickly recover their calm. They knew there was no value staying angry over the Star Palace's disruption. Instead, the Righteous and Devilish Dao floated in the air in confrontation.

Han Li was once again ascending as he remained on the light

barrier that broke his fall. At that moment, he looking at his hands in horror. They were bloodily crushed and there was a complete tear between his thumb and forefinger. But his gaze didn't stay there, instead focusing on the jade scepter that he was clenched in the right hand.

At that moment, Wan Tianming coughed as if he wanted to say something to the Devil Dao cultivators, but at that moment, Zenith Yin's fire pythons were no longer able to endure and had let go with a wail, returning to their original forms.

The Heavenvoid Cauldron released a hum as it fell.

Everyone couldn't help but lower their heads at the scene, even Wan Tianming who was about to speak. Zenith Yin looked particularly gloomy, and his eyes contained objection.

But then, something completely unexpected occurred!

As the Heavenvoid Cauldron was falling, it had been been struck by something, and its hum became a dragon's roar. Then with a heavy roll of thunder, a fist-sized rainbow ball of light shot out into the air from within the blue flames.

“Heavenmend Pill!” Both the Righteous and Devil Dao cultivators simultaneously shouted out its name with delighted surprise.

Chapter 487: Appearance of a Nascent Soul

Chaos erupted in the sky in response to the appearance of the Heavenmend Pill.

Having been on the cusp of making peace with one another just a mere moment ago, everyone immediately turned into streaks of light and shot straight towards the newly emerged ball of rainbow light. But halfway there, their lights became interweaved, rendering them all incapable of advancing even a step forward. For a time, radiance flashed and Devilish Qi scattered in a far more intense display than before.

As for the rainbow ball of light, it was motionlessly floating above the hole as if it waiting for someone to grab it.

Everyone had now clearly seen the inch-thick medicine pill revolving inside the rainbow ball of light. Each time the pill turned, the ball of light flickered and contracted, appearing as if it were alive. Upon seeing this, the Nascent Soul cultivators only became even more fervent.

Wu Chou and the Bone Sage were both mesmerized as they watched the battle that had erupted in the sky.

Wu Chou suddenly heard Zenith Yin's ice-cold voice in his ear, "Are you an idiot? What are you looking at! Quickly, acquire the Heavenmend Pill!" After hearing this, Wu Chou shuddered in realization and shot towards the rainbow ball of light as a cloud of black Qi.

At that moment, the Bone Sage also took action. However, the Heavenmend Pill wasn't his target. Instead, his hands blurred, transforming into devilish green pythons as they shot straight for Wu Chou's back.

Although the green pythons' attack was silent, Wu Chou had been vigilant and faintly perceived their approach. In an instant, he hastily turned around to receive the attack in furious alarm.

"You're courting death to actually be attacking me!" Wu Chou was unable to suppress his rage, causing his Profound Yin Qi to scream out around him and rush towards the Bone Sage.

The Bone Sage coldly chuckled and responded by wordlessly sending a cloud of green Ghost Qi at him in response.

"Man Huzi! What is your junior doing!?" Zenith Yin naturally saw what was happening and furiously yelled at Man Huzi.

Man Huzi launched a golden fist towards Wan Tianming before roaring with laughter, "What is he doing? Obviously, he is blocking Fellow Daoist Wu from monopolizing the Heavenmend Pill. Did you really think because we're fellow Devil Dao cultivators that this Lord would just give the Heavenmend Pill to you?"

"You..." When Zenith Yin heard this, his face turned white from anger. Man Huzi's words had effectively dissolved the alliance between the Devil Dao cultivators, leaving the acquisition of the

Heavenmend Pill up to skill. But, such a development had been inevitable from the very beginning of their alliance.

The Heavenvoid Cauldron hadn't been acquired and only one Heavenmend Pill had appeared. Naturally, everyone wished to acquire it. Let alone the Devil Dao cultivators, even the Righteous Dao cultivators had their own sinister plots in mind.

Zenith Yin clearly understood that the midst of battle was not the time to be squabbling. He settled his mind and thought about using his Heavenwide Corpses to acquire the Heavenmend Pill, but the dark-skinned old farmer's techniques were threatening and couldn't be ignored. So long as he released even a single demon corpse, the old farmer would release a green thread as if it had been foreseen and immediately restrained it. They simply wouldn't be able to escape. The situation caused him to clench his teeth with hate towards both the farmer and Man Huzi.

However, it wasn't Zenith Yin who solely thought this way. Each one of the Nascent Soul cultivators had similar circumstances and were looking for any way they could escape from the battle and seize the treasure.

Unfortunately, all of the old eccentrics present were exceptionally cunning and deceitful; none of them could easily break away from the fray. After all, it was far simpler to tie someone down than to fully escape the battle.

As the Nascent Soul melee was unraveling in the sky, no one was paying any heed to Han Li.

Han Li had been greatly surprised when he survived the Star Palace elder's strike. After all, he had been struck head on by a Nascent Soul magic treasure, but when he looked down at his chest, he discovered he had been saved by the Emperor Scale Plate that Man Huzi had lent him.

The remnants of his outer clothes had already been burnt black, only to reveal the sparkling silver scales that lay underneath. However, there was a slight dent at the very center of the armor.

Han Li rejoiced after seeing this. Fortunately, he had decided to wear the armor as soon as he examined that nothing was wrong with it, as he expected the Heavenvoid Hall to be extremely dangerous. As a result, his life had been saved.

However, Han Li clearly understood that the most significant reason he survived was the red and yellow jade scepter.

Just as he had brought the jade scepter up to block the attack, he faintly saw a silver wolf head emerge from the scepter and absorb a majority of the blow's force. Otherwise, despite its amazing defensive power, the Emperor Scale Plate wouldn't have remained intact. In that case, he would have suffered a heavy injury, even if the attack didn't penetrate the armor.

Han Li wished to further examine the true capabilities of the scepter, but now was not a good opportunity. It was only after he put away the scepter that he felt the ferocious pain coming from his palm and web between his thumb and forefinger.

Han Li clenched his teeth and his hands flashed with white light, healing his wounds at a speed visible to the eye. At the same time, he vigilantly swept his gaze over the scene and saw the tragic state of his Bloodjade Spider's corpse on the altar.

A trace of sadness flickered from Han Li's eyes before it was replaced with wide eyes filled with determination. He crawled to the edge of the light barrier that was holding him up and silently flew to the steps.

According to his exceptional memory, so long as those mechanical puppets didn't reappear, he should be able to return to the previous floor without much danger. This would be far better than staying in place and leaving himself at the mercy of those old Nascent Soul Devils.

After all, Han Li had lost all value to them once his Bloodjade Spider had perished. Without any more protective talismans on him, he couldn't possibly entrust his life to the goodwill of those Devil Dao cultivators. Han Li's best course of action would be for him to take his life into his own hands!

Moreover, the attempt to acquire the Heavenvoid Cauldron had failed. Even if those old Devils still managed to seize the Heavenmend Pill, wouldn't they still have a bellyful of anger? It was certain that he would be the target for them to relieve their frustrations.

With that thought, Han Li's movements became even more

stealthy. Just as he had silently flown for about forty meters and was about to prepare for his reckless charge, he suddenly heard a voice say, “Han Li, where are you going?”

Although the Bone Sage’s voice was calm and soft, it was enough for Zenith Yin and the others to hear clearly.

In an instant, Zenith Yin and Man Huzi shot an ice-cold glance at Han Li, causing him to stop in place.

‘Damned Bone Sage!’ Having caught the attention of the Devil Dao cultivators, Han Li didn’t have the slightest confidence in escaping them. In the short amount of time he would be slowed down by the light barrier, Zenith Yin alone would be able kill him several times over.

The Bone Sage sneered. He had been using his spiritual sense to monitor Han Li this entire time. Although he had managed to cleanly deal with Wu Chou, he didn’t display the slightest intention of acquiring the Heavenvoid Pill, rendering his intentions unclear..

After returning, Han Li shot him a hateful glance, and a trace of suspicion arose in his mind.

“Man Huzi, if you do not step aside, then don’t blame this Sect Master for using his Heavensifting Mines!” Wan Tianming saw that the rainbow ball wasn’t far beneath him, but in a mere instant, he had been beaten back by Man Huzi’s golden fists. Having already suffered this several times, Wan Tianming had

finally flown into a rage.

Man Huzi was somewhat startled by this, but he soon sneered and casually said, “The Heavensifting Mine! Zenith Yin and Qing Yi might be afraid of it, but this mighty Lord wishes to see its power. I’m afraid I must request for Fellow Daoist Wan to broaden my perspective!” It was clear that he didn’t believe Wan Tianming was actually going to use the treasure.

With a pale, ashen face, Wan Tianming clenched his teeth in anger, saying, “Good, good! Man Huzi, you’ve forced this sect master to allow you to witness the true ferocity of the Heavensifting Mine!”

After that was said, he slapped the top of his head without further hesitation. A resounding cry sounded out, followed by a purple light that shot from the top of his head. It stopped about a meter above his head and revealed itself to be a two-inch tall naked infant. Purple light wound around its body, and its skin appeared soft and delicate. But what was more shocking was that its face was entirely the same as Wan Tianming and that it held a sparkling purple ball in its hand.

Man Huzi’s careless expression underwent a massive change. With a spirited gaze, he imposingly said, “Nascent Soul Manifestation! Wan Tianming, do you truly wish for your soul to be exterminated?”

“My lifespan has already nearly reached its end. What difference does it make whether or not I die a bit sooner if I cannot acquire the Heavenment Pill? At worst, I’ll have Fellow Daoist Man assist

in sending me off onto the path of a warrior's reincarnation." After those vague words were said, his Nascent Soul became exasperated as if it had been strenuous for him to speak.

At the same time that Wan Tianming's Nascent Soul appeared, his physical body had closed its eyes and become completely motionless as if it had become unconscious.

Chapter 488: Battle for the Medicine Pill

“Humph! Reincarnation? You sure can dream! You’re not afraid that I’ll refine your Nascent Soul? I’ll be denying you of your next life.” Man Huzi icily said as he glared at Wan Tianming’s Nascent Soul.

“If you truly have the ability, then so be it, I will suffer. Instead of wasting time further deliberating on the matter, wouldn’t it be better for Fellow Daoist Man to receive my Heavensifting Mines first?” After the infant spoke, it tossed out two balls from its hands. As soon as the purple balls left its hands, they immediately grew several times larger and launched themselves towards Man Huzi with an overbearing momentum.

Man Huzi’s eyes widened and his face contorted in anger. He fiercely struck his chest with both hands, causing a divine sound to ring out from his head along with a burst of golden light. A two-inch long infant with faintly golden skin and Man Huzi’s face appeared above his head. It was slightly larger and more solid than Wan Tianming’s Nascent Soul. However, its eyes were closed and it held a small azure shield tightly in its hands. The round shield appeared exquisite and had a radiant soybean-sized stone embedded in its center.

Although Man Huzi’s Nascent Soul had its eyes closed, it was still aware of the approaching purple ball of light. It lifted the shield in its hands, emitting a light barrier that covered Man Huzi’s entire body just before the purple balls of light struck his body.

The others Nascent Soul cultivators were dumbstruck upon

seeing both of their Nascent Souls manifest, as it signified they were now in a battle of life or death.

A world-shattering explosion shook the skies, and the light barrier surrounding the stone platform radiated a purple-red light. A forty-meter-wide cloud of lightning suddenly appeared, binding Man Huzi at its center. Purple lightning wildly stormed inside the clouds with thunderous bellows and blinding flashes of light intertwined. It was as if divine retribution had come, bringing forth an execution by celestial lightning.

The others were thoroughly shocked by the sight. They had long heard of the Heavensifting Mine's ferocity, but this was the first time they had seen it. It was truly fearsome and deserving of its grand reputation.

However, their attacks only became more fierce after witnessing the might of the Heavensifting Mine.

Without looking at Man Huzi, Wan Tianming's Nascent Soul waved its small hand, summoning a small purple sword. With a flash of purple light, the Nascent Soul and the small sword disappeared. An instant later, it reappeared fifteen meters above the medicine pill.

"Nascent Soul Swordflight!" The other four Nascent Soul cultivators looked on in shock. It wasn't a trick of their eyes produced by amazing speed, but actual teleportation. Without a fleshly body to tie down the Nascent Soul, it was capable of extraordinary abilities.

However, these sorts of wondrous techniques greatly harmed one's own Origin Qi. Although all Nascent Soul cultivators knew these techniques, none were willing to lightly make use of them. But now, much to everyone's astonishment, Wan Tianming had used one to great effect.

Zenith Yin and Qing Yi simultaneously abandoned their opponents and hastily shot towards the Heavenmend Pill. As for their opponents, Tian Wuzi and the old farmer, after glancing at each other, they merely cast a few magic techniques after them in a token show of effort, not making much of an attempt to block them.

As such, Zenith Yin and Qing Yi were able to easily break free and quickly descended.

Wan Tianming's Nascent Soul didn't turn its head around, but it was still able to see what was happening behind it. An unsuitable sneer appeared on the infant's face. At his current distance, the Heavenmend Pill was practically his. What could they do now to block him?

As expected, Wan Tianming's Nascent Soul flickered several times, appearing closer to the rainbow ball of light with each appearance. A large purple hand then appeared out of the air and grabbed the rainbow ball into its hand. The ball of light disappeared as soon as it had been grasped by the hand, leaving behind only the rainbow pill.

Wan Tianming went rapt with delight as Zenith Yin and Qing Yi soon appeared behind him. They couldn't possibly allow Wan Tianming to succeed. Zenith Yin furiously growled, "Wan Tianming, let go of the pill." A large cloud of profound devilish Qi then enveloped Wan Tianming's Nascent soul, along with countless azure threads of light that tightly wove around it.

"Are you truly capable of restraining me?" The Nascent Soul scoffed, and with a flash of violet light, it disappeared from the black fog and azure light surrounding it. It reappeared forty meters away on the small purple sword with a mocking expression.

But as soon as the mocking smile appeared on his face, it was immediately replaced with fear. It suddenly turned its attention to the sky above in disbelief. What it saw caused the infant's face to grow incredibly pale.

Above him in the sky, Wan Tianming's fleshly body was in the grasp of a lofty figure surrounded in sparkling golden light. Who else could it be aside from Man Huzi?

But now, Man Huzi's hair was completely curled and his clothes were in tatters, making for quite a wretched appearance. Still, the gold scales surrounding his body and his fiendish expression gave him a resemblance similar to that of a malevolent god.

"Impossible! How were you able to escape?" Wan Tianming hastily looked at the lightning storm in disbelief, but his fears were only solidified. The domineering storm of purple lightning had disappeared, leaving behind only a few traces of static.

“Hehe! Sect Master Wang, it can only be said that your luck was quite poor. In the past, I slaughtered a lightning whale demon beast. Although its body was heavily injured, the lightning absorption pearl inside its body had remained completely intact. Your Heavensifting Mine may be formidable, but with a majority of its strength absorbed by the pearl, it posed little threat to me.” Man Huzi raised his hand, revealing a gem that flickered with violet light. Then with a wave of his hand, it disappeared.

“Now, this great Lord is going to count to three. If you do not throw the Heavenmend Pill to me, I will destroy your physical body. You should know what happens afterwards!” Man Huzi didn’t give Wan Tianming any leeway or time to consider. With one hand carrying Wan Tianming’s body and the other grasping the skull, he started counting. His hands began to shine with brilliant golden light.

Wan Tianming bitterly clenched his teeth. He had clearly placed several restrictions down on his fleshly body before he manifested his Nascent Soul. But now, his body had fallen into the hands of an enemy that possessed a lightning absorption stone. He could hardly believe it.

He didn’t have the slightest time to think. If his body were to be destroyed, his Nascent Soul would surely turn to dust. He had yet to reach the stage where his Nascent Soul could roam alone. Although a Nascent Soul cultivator could manifest their Nascent Soul to perform a few extraordinary techniques, it was rarely done as it would leave their body vulnerable. With the Heavenmend Pill in sight and after having been tied down by Man Huzi for so long, Wan Tianming became overwhelmed with impatience and greed,

causing him to make such a grave mistake.

With Man Huzi staunchly refusing to compromise, Wan Tianming felt immense remorse and started to quickly analyze his options. But as soon as Man Huzi said, “Two”, he clenched his teeth and tossed the Heavenmend Pill towards Man Huzi.

Wan Tianming helplessly threw the pill he had acquired from using his Nascent Soul Swordflight, concluding the dramatic development in an instant.

Excitement flashed from Man Huzi’s eyes. After he flew forward and caught the rainbow pill, he ruthlessly threw Wan Tianming’s body towards the other side of the light barrier with all his strength. If no one were to intercept it, it would surely be crushed to pulp.

When Wan Tianming saw this, he was overwhelmed with fright and shot towards his body without a thought. Fortunately, despite being far away, he was able to intercept it by using the teleportations of his Nascent Soul Swordflight. Man Huzi then took advantage of the situation and flew towards the exit in a streak of light.

It wasn’t that Man Huzi didn’t want to kill Wan Tianming, but rather, Wan Tianming was the Sect Master of the Thousand Gates of Enlightenment. Had he truly killed him, he would become a target of the Righteous Dao. There was also the matter of the Thousand Gates of Enlightenment’s Mad Matron, the number one figure of the Righteous Dao. He wasn’t yet her match and was unwilling to be relentlessly hunted down by her. As the main

enemy of both the Devil and the Righteous Dao was still the Star Palace, he naturally only aimed for the medicine pill.

Seeing that Man Huzi had unexpectedly acquired the Heavenmend Pill and was about to escape, Tian Wuxi and the old farmer immediately chased after him.

Zenith Yin and Qing Yi had been momentarily stunned by the scene. After glancing at each other, they gave chase, unwilling to accept defeat.

But before Zenith Yin gave chase, he turned into a black cloud and arrived above Han Li and Wu Chou. He coldly said, "Wu Chou! Stay here with Han Li and don't wander. I will return in a moment. I will lend these two demon corpses to you for now." After that was said, two Heavenwide Corpses appeared at Wu Chou's side, and Zenith Yin blurred through the air with a flicker.

As such, the Nascent Soul cultivators were all chasing Man Huzi. Each of them blew a hole through the light barrier at the stairs in wild pursuit of Man Huzi. As for Wan Tianming who had just regained control of his body, he grit his teeth and followed suit.

Chapter 489: Killing Wu Chou

During the time when Wan Tianming was acquiring the Heavenmend Pill, Wu Chou was being restrained by the Bone Sage. He wasn't so foolish that he could not understand how much stronger the Bone Sage was compared to himself. In addition, it appeared that the Bone Sage held a deep understanding towards the Profound Yin Arts. Each of his strikes had been dissolved with little effort.

Although that had frightened Wu Chou, he was now delighted to find the two Heavenwide Corpses at his side. Each of the demon corpses were no less powerful than a mid Core Formation cultivator. Despite the Bone Sage's fearsomeness, even he shouldn't pose much of a threat to him now. Even better, Wu Chou now had the opportunity to teach him a lesson. After the eccentrics left the stone platform, he immediately wore a sinister smile and looked at the Bone Sage with a malicious gaze.

After looking at the eccentrics exit at the bottom of the stairs, he turned around to see Wu Chou's malicious expression and the two demon corpses at his side. He calmly smiled and said, "Han Li, this person is Zenith Yin's sole descendant! If I kill him, won't Zenith Yin suffer quite a bit of pain?"

Shock momentarily appeared on Han Li's face, but his expression quickly returned to normal. He then indifferently gazed at the Bone Sage in silence. However, when Wu Chou heard this, he became vigilant and doubtfully glanced at Han Li. At that same time, the two demon corpses at his side had disappeared from sight.

Wu Chou harshly said, “Han Li, have you been colluding with him this entire time? That’s why he knocked the jade scepter in your direction earlier? How about you take that treasure out when my esteemed grandfather returns and let him decide who gets to keep it?”

Having heard these false charges in an attempt to seize his treasure, Han Li became dumbfounded. It was clear Wu Chou had shed all pretenses of not oppressing him now that he felt Han Li no longer possessed any value. Perhaps Zenith Yin had even given him these orders in secret before his departure.

With that thought, the corner of Han Li’s mouth twitched; the many flying swords contained in his body throbbed with excitement.

But it was the Bone Sage that was first to act. With a sweep of his hand, a green snake shot out from his cuff towards an empty location, resulting in a dull bang. Soon after, a green silhouette was revealed.

The Bone Sage smirked and spoke disdainfully, “Heavenwide Corpse Demon? Figures that Zenith Yin had refined so many of them!” The Bone Sage then quickly pointed at it, causing a green lotus to emerge from its body. The green lotus wildly flourished until the flower petals completely enveloped the demon corpse.

Wu Chou was greatly startled and hastily ordered the demon corpse to break free. But for some unknown reason, his connection

to the demon corpse had been completely severed and he could no longer control it. In that moment, his body broke out into a cold sweat. Just as he thought to control his remaining demon corpse, the Bone Sage's body blurred and suddenly reappeared right before him. A flustered expression of panic arose from Wu Chou's face as he hastily protected his body with a large cloud of Profound Yin Qi. At that same time, a fierce glint flashed from his eyes and he opened his mouth, spitting out a small black sword that pierced towards the Bone Sage at a speed faster than lightning.

The Bone Sage's face wore a trace of derision. His fingernails immediately grew several inches long and became razor-sharp, making for a sinister appearance. He then reached out to the small sword and caught it without the slightest resistance.

Wu Chou's complexion became deathly pale from disbelief. He quickly ordered the flying sword to return, but the Bone Sage had already grasped it between his claws with a malicious expression. After many attempts to break free from his grasp, the small sword scattered into black dust. At that same moment, Wu Chou's complexion paled at the destruction of his magic treasure and he involuntarily spat out a mist of black blood.

"Impossible, you..." Wu Chou only had time to incredulously say those few words before the Bone Sage moved to strike him. His ghostly claw was enveloped with spirals of green Qi.

No longer capable of further speech, Wu Chou whistled, ordering the entirety of his surrounding Profound Yin Qi to face the strike. At that same moment, his hand reached for the inside of his robes, wanting to take out a treasure.

A strange scene occurred. With a flash of black-green light, the Bone Sage's ghost claw rapidly turned and the green Qi surrounding it turned pitch-black, piercing through the several layers of Wu Chou's Profound Yin Qi as if nothing had been there.

Wu Chou lowered his head in terror and saw the ghost claw piercing through his abdomen. Eyes filled with disbelief, he muttered a few words before the Bone Sage coldly laughed and shot countless streams of green fire from his claw, turning Wu Chou's body into ashes in the blink of an eye, leaving behind a black embroidered scarf, a ring, and a storage pouch.

No longer possessing a master, the other Heavenwide Demon Corpse appeared beside the Bone Sage in a flash of black light. Its eyes were completely spiritless and it motionlessly stood in place as if it were now truly dead.

After witnessing this sequence of events, Han Li's heart trembled and a newfound fear towards the old devil had grown within him!

It was now clear that he hadn't been lying when he had said that he was well acquainted with the weaknesses of the Profound Yin Art. When Wu Chou had used his Profound Yin Qi to block the attack, it didn't have the slightest effect. But why was it that the Bone Sage chose this moment to kill Wu Chou? Did he not fear that he would alert Zenith Yin? Could it be that he was forcing him into battle, giving him no choice but to fight against Zenith Yin?

Han Li's alarmed mind began to churn. As he did this, he readied

the five colored copper bands in his hand. If the Bone Sage made any hostile movements against him, he would have to fight with his life on the line.

At that moment, the Bone Sage had already gathered Wu Chou's spoils and looked at Han Li with a mysterious smile. "What are you doing, glaring at me like that? Quickly take out your other Bloodjade Spider. The others have been drawn away by Man Huzi, but we don't know how long it will take for them to return. What, could it be that you aren't interested in the treasures of the Heavenvoid Cauldron?"

The Bone Sage's words shocked Han Li and caused Han Li's gaze to wander. He had carefully concealed the existence of his other Bloodjade Spider. How could the Bone Sage possibly know about it?

He glanced at the corpse of the long deceased Bloodjade Spider. "What other Bloodjade Spider? My spirit beast has already been slain by the Star Palace elder." Not knowing how the Bone Sage could possibly know, Han Li was unwilling to acknowledge it.

"Humph! Youngster, I don't have the time to waste on you, so I will tell you the truth. Long ago, I found a pair of Bloodjade Spiders and put them into the care of my other traitorous disciple, Zenith Brilliance. I thought to bring the spiders to the Heavenvoid Hall and seize the cauldron when they were a higher grade, but I hadn't expected that my disciples would betray me before that happened. Since you had that jade talisman, I figured that your Bloodjade Spider had originated from the Zenith Brilliance's pair. You may not know this, but Bloodjade Spiders possess some

peculiar characteristics. Although a nest will have many eggs, only two of them will survive. These two spiders are certain to be a male-female pair. In addition, they can only ascend grades when the male and female spider are together. This was something that I had personally concluded after observing a pair of wild Bloodjade Spiders. After all, one must be familiar with a spirit beast's properties if they are to promote its grade. However, this was unknown to Zenith Brilliance. He believed I had acquired both a male and female spider out of pure luck! Since the grade of your spider was so high, you must certainly have another. How about you take it out?"

The Bone Sage's quick explanation had left Han Li dumbfounded for a moment, as he truly hadn't known any of this. It seemed that the rainbow skeleton from back then had likely been Zenith Brilliance, but how did that fit together with the Emperor of Yue and Zenith Yin Island's cultivation arts? Although Han Li's mind was flooded with doubts, he licked his lips and calmly replied, "That's right, I do have another Bloodjade Spider. But why should I help you acquire the Heavenvoid Cauldron? Are you willing to give me half of it? Moreover, there will be tremendous, world-shaking tremors as the Heavenvoid Cauldron is extracted. Wouldn't this disturbance attract the attention of the other Nascent Soul cultivators and make them immediately return? That would just quicken our deaths. Also, it was only with the help of the flame pythons that the Bloodjade Spider had been able to slowly pull up the Cauldron. My remaining Bloodjade Spider isn't enough to pull it up."

Han Li spoke these words with a calm expression. Although he felt immense temptation towards the Heavenvoid Cauldron, he stifled the burning excitement in his heart, allowing reason to seep through. He didn't wish to die just because of greed. After a

moment of consideration, Han Li decided his best choice was to immediately escape. Without waiting for the Bone Sage's response, Han Li flickered, blurring towards the exit.

However, it seemed that the Bone Sage had already predicted what Han Li would do. The next words he uttered caused Han Li to slow to a stop.

Chapter 490: The Cauldron's Reappearance

The Bone Sage coldly said, “Youngster Han, don’t you wish to condense a Nascent Soul? The Heavenmend Pill’s greatest effect is that it purifies a Core Formation cultivator’s innate spiritual roots, allowing a cultivator to enter the Nascent Soul stage with greater ease.”

Han Li was silent for a moment before turning around. He narrowed his eyes and spoke with disbelief, “Purify one’s spiritual roots? You must think I am a child! How could there be such a legendary, heaven-defying medicine?”

“Hehe, it’s up to you whether or not you believe it. Do you think that I have lived my many years idly? Back then, I had captured a Star Palace elder and used soul searching techniques to acquire this information. The outside rumors that this pill can break through the bottleneck of the Nascent Soul stage, causes a massive increase of one’s magic power, and can lengthen one’s life are completely false. It had been proven when a Star Palace Master had personally consumed the Heavenmend Pill.”

The Bone Sage calmly continued with a careless expression, “And since you’ve already acquired the Ninecurl Ginseng, with the complimentary effects of the Heavenmend Pill, your odds of condensing a Nascent Soul will reach forty percent. If you wait another three hundred years to acquire a Heavenmend Pill, its effects will be of little use by then. This is due to the long process of spiritual root purification. It will take over a hundred years for the effects to be fully displayed.”

“A forty percent chance at Nascent Soul condensation?” Han Li felt giddy with excitement.

As if having seen through Han Li’s thoughts, the Bone Sage smiled and added, “As for your worries that the tremors would be far too noticeable, even if a great catastrophe struck, there would be no way they could possibly know unless they saw it for their own eyes; the barrier completely isolates any disturbances that occur from within. They can’t use their spiritual sense to observe what happens in here either. Why else would this Tailstar Barrier have been so renowned even in the era of antiquity! And if you’re worried about your single Bloodjade Spider being unable to lift the cauldron, don’t forget that I am Zenith Yin’s master. Even as a demon ghost, I am still capable of refining corpses.”

With that said, the Bone Sage immediately opened his mouth and spat out a fist-sized ball of glimmering light towards the Bloodjade Spider’s corpse next to the altar. In the blink of an eye, a dense, green mist enveloped the spider corpse that quickly absorbed it. A short moment later, the two halves of the spider began to join together. Green light flashed from the point of incision, and the Bloodjade Spider shakily stood up, whole once more.

Although Han Li managed to maintain a calm expression as he watched the scene, he was inwardly overwhelmed with shock. The world of cultivation truly had no shortage of extraordinary things! There was even such a technique that can refine a corpse in nearly an instant.

The Bone Sage made the spider corpse walk several steps before he turned to Han Li and confidently said, “My corpse refinement

technique is passable, yes? Although the refined spider corpse won't last for long, and it is somewhat weaker than when it was alive, it will have no problem lifting the cauldron with your surviving Bloodjade Spider. After we acquire the treasure, I will give you all the Heavenmend Pills as I have no need of them. Also, I will cede half of the Heavenvoid Cauldron's other treasures to you, but the cauldron is mine. How do you feel about this trade?"

"Humph! Your words may be extravagantly beautiful, but how do I know you won't immediately attack me after the Heavenvoid Cauldron is secure? After all, your cultivation and techniques are both an entire realm above me."

When the Bone Sage heard this, he inwardly rejoiced. Although Han Li's tone was quite harsh, it was clear he was on the cusp of agreeing. Now, it was only a matter of haggling over price.

As a result, the Bone Sage smiled and hastily said, "Han Li, you're being far too humble! If I guessed correctly, if we were to fight to the death, the odds would be fifty-fifty. Moreover, such a battle wouldn't be concluded in a short amount of time, allowing an increased window for the others to return. Do you truly believe me to be so foolish as to bring about both of our deaths? Naturally, so long as you agree to help me acquire the treasure, I will hand over the Ninecurl Spirit Ginseng refinement formula over to you as a token of our sincere cooperation."

After this was said, the Bone Sage flipped his hand and tossed a white jade slip with an ancient aura towards Han Li.

Han LI quickly raised his hand and beckoned to the approaching

jade slip. With an azure flash, a ball of azure light enveloped it, quickly bringing it to his palm.

The Bone Sage responded to Han Li's great carefulness with a chuckle and said nothing else.

Han Li quickly swept through the contents of the jade slip with his spiritual sense. Although he didn't have enough time to mull over whether or not the pill formula was genuine, it did mention the Ninecurl Spirit Ginseng as well as three supplementary medicinal ingredients Han Li had never heard of before.

After some consideration, Han Li bluntly put the jade slip into his storage pouch and raised his head. He calmly gazed at the Bone Sage and said, "Fine, I will agree to these conditions. Let's immediately start retrieving the cauldron!"

Since he had agreed to act, Han Li no longer delayed, as it would only allow their enemies more time to return. He quickly pat his spirit beast pouch causing his other Bloodjade Spider to appear with a flash of light.

"Very good, you made the right choice." With an expression of excitement, the Bone Sage approached the hole and ordered the refined spider corpse to spit out a web at the cauldron, finishing his preparations first.

Han Li followed suit, calmly ordering his Bloodjade Spider to shoot a web at the Heavenvoid Cauldron as well.

The Bone Sage cast several magic seals of varying colors at his Bloodjade Spider as he gave an explanation, “Let’s be quick. We don’t have much time. Although I cannot make use of the Berserking Technique in my current form, I can still use other slightly weaker supplementary techniques.”

Suddenly, the Bloodjade Spider entered a frantic state. Apart from its blood-red shell, distinct black and green radiance were interweaved, making for quite a strange display.

Han Li frowned but remained silent. After all, without these supplementary techniques, the Bloodjade Spider would be incapable of lifting the Heavenvoid Cauldron.

With the combined power of the Bloodjade Spider and the spider corpse, the cauldron began to rise with violent quakes and flares of blue light.

Without the protection of Layman Qing Yi, Han Li could only rely on himself. He hastily cast a fire attribute barrier around himself and utilized the White Rhino Emblem to its maximum potential, immersing him in a blistering white light. And for the innermost layer, he released the Azure Essence Swordbarrier. A layer of azure radiance appeared close to Han Li’s body with faint sparks of gold mixed within.

As for the Bone Sage, green Qi violently surged from his body, enveloping him in a dense ghostly barrier.

‘I can still hold!’ Although the cold glacial Qi filled Han Li with a

bone-chilling sensation, the full-strength circulation of the Azure Essence Sword Art allowed him to painstakingly avoid being frozen.

This allowed Han Li to personally experience the massive gap between the Core Formation and Nascent Soul stages. Previously, all it had taken was a casual wave of Qing Yi's hand to produce a barrier that completely shielded him from the cold.

Han Li sighed and focused a majority of his attention on the hole. His remaining attention was focused on the Bone Sage. Despite the Bone Sage's extravagant words, Han Li felt a need to remain vigilant of the old devil.

With the strength of the frenzied Bloodjade Spider, the Heavenvoid Cauldron began to slowly rise once more.

But for some unknown reason, Han Li felt that it was unbearably slow in comparison to the last attempt. It was as if every inch it was raised took an excruciatingly long time, much to Han Li's irritation. If any of the old Devils returned to this scene, it would make for a terrible situation.

The Bone Sage appeared completely undisturbed, but once the blue light from the hole grew increasingly brilliant, a fervent expression began to appear on his face.

As the two stared down, their perception of the passage of time grew even slower with every rise of the Heavenvoid Cauldron.

While it was still unknown where the Nascent Soul eccentrics had wandered off to, their absence inspired both fear and delight in Han Li's mind.

Suddenly, Han Li and the Bone Sage both shot to the sky as the blue flames had reached the top of the hole. Huge blue flames had blossomed yet again and immersed the world in blue frost.

As Han Li stared at the vague shadow contained inside the icy flames, he could hear his own heart thumping in anticipation.

The last time the cauldron had appeared, he had been entirely focused on the old devils and hadn't examined the cauldron in the slightest. Now, he had the opportunity to witness its true appearance with his own eyes.

Although only some of it was exposed, Han Li was still able to make it out.

Chapter 491: Acquiring the Cauldron

The Heavenvoid Cauldron had a flat bottom, two handles, and three legs. At over a meter tall and three meters wide, it couldn't be considered very large.

It had a slightly protruding lid covered in carvings of beasts and insects along with various landscapes. Although they appeared rough and crude, they were true to life and exuded an aura of untamed antiquity.

Just as the cauldron emerged from the hole, a faint hum was heard that gradually became louder. At the same time, the blue flames surrounding the cauldron flared before swelling to several times their original size.

Having originally been standing near the hole, Han Li and the Bone Sage revealed expressions of shock at nearly the same time and increased their distance from the altar.

The entire area within thirty meters of the altar glowed with faint blue light and was completely frozen over.

Apart from the minor flickering of the blue flames at the hole and the movements of the blood-red spiders, everything had been encased in blue ice. Had Han Li and the Bone Sage been slower, they would've undoubtedly been frozen as well.

At that moment, the entire altar was covered in a dome of blue crystal.

Han Li couldn't help but betray his shock upon seeing this astonishing scene and asked, "How are we supposed to get the treasure out of that?" Han Li gazed at the marvelous frozen scene without any idea of where to begin.

The Bone Sage stared at the Celestial Ice Flames with a solemn expression and said, "It's not a problem. I have a way of restraining the Celestial Ice Flames. My Profound Soul Ghost Flames are also cold by nature. Although it is in no way its equal, I will be able to break through the crystal and separate the flames from the cauldron. In that moment, you will take the cauldron out of the hole."

Although his voice sounded cold, Han Li was able to make out a trace of excitement.

Han Li was shocked! The Bone Sage took the initiative to deal with the extremely dangerous blue flames and wanted him to extract the cauldron. As this was truly unexpected, he couldn't help but look at the Bone Sage with an odd expression.

Han Li absolutely didn't believe that the old devil was doing this out of kindness. However, this method didn't seem to have any faults. Could it be that it was more dangerous to acquire the Heavenvoid Cauldron? Suspicions began to surge through Han Li's mind.

Naturally, Han Li would definitely have refused if the Bone Sage proposed that Han Li would deal with the ice flame, and he would

acquire the treasure. With that thought, Han Li could only agree.

He couldn't shrink back now, so his only option was to move forward with discretion. If anything went amiss while acquiring the cauldron, he would naturally choose to save his own life over acquiring the treasure.

Having come to this decision, Han Li casually nodded towards the Bone Sage in agreement.

The Bone Sage responded with a pleased smile. He then glanced at the ice flames several times with an odd expression before his body began to revolve in the air. Ghostly Qi began to spiral around his body, creating a three meter wide dark-green tornado. The air surrounding him became a dense mist that intermittently released faint ghostly wails. The whirlwind then dropped down towards the blue flames.

A huge rumble erupted as the whirlwind dropped down, igniting into a torrent of flame. The result was a forty meter high pillar of red and white flames revolving around a core of dark-green flame. It completely lacked any warmth and instead gave off an extremely cold impression.

Han Li's eyes widened as he stared at the pillar of fire colliding against the blue frost.

In that instant, the three colors of light intertwined into one, producing a harsh sound of scraping metal, causing Han Li to frown.

Han Li soon unfurled his frown as the flame pillar managed to forcibly drill a passage straight towards the center of the blue flame.

Han Li grew nervous at the sight and quickly linked his consciousness to the Bloodjade Spider. So long as the Bone Sage truly managed to separate the Heavenvoid Cauldron from the Celestial Ice Flames, he would immediately order his Bloodjade Spider to exert its strength.

Eventually, the Bone Sage's pillar of fire managed to reach the hole.

The flickering, glaring blue flames remained dormant for a short moment before finally erupting. In that instant, the pillar of flame transformed into a huge dark-green lotus, wrapping around the Heavenvoid Cauldron.

Han Li was shocked at the sight. The first thought that came to his mind was that the Bone Sage had reneged on their agreement and intended to keep the Heavenvoid Cauldron for himself. With that thought, he immediately prepared the five-colored copper band and became vigilant. However, the following scene caused Han Li to become relieved.

Shortly after, the huge lotus became enveloped in blue flames, becoming something like a shell over the Heavenvoid Cauldron.

Han Li's heart quickly thumped, and his face flushed with

excitement. He sighed in awe of the Bone Sage's marvelous technique and quickly ordered his Bloodjade Spider to exert its strength and lift.

With a loud cry, the taut web violently trembled as the Bloodjade Spider heaved at the cauldron with all its might, producing an unreal result that was completely unexpected.

The cauldron they had assumed was immensely heavy flew to Han Li's side as if it weighted nothing at all.

Han Li was overjoyed at first, but his mind then grew stern.

Not daring to be careless, he raised his hands and shot out two mists of light. They suddenly transformed into ropes along the way and wound around the cauldron's two handles. With a heavy pull, the cauldron fell about ten meters in front of Han Li.

Han Li was rather stunned at how easy it had been to acquire the Heavenvoid Cauldron.

He faintly felt that the reason why the treasure had been so easily acquired was because it had been separated from the Celestial Ice Flame.

However, those thoughts only lasted for a moment before they were tossed to the back of his mind. Han Li then shook the ropes, having them wrap around the cauldron and slowly drag it closer.

With a muttered incantation, the ropes quickly faded away and slowly dropped the Heavenvoid Cauldron into his hand.

This sequence of events went off alarmingly smoothly without even the slightest mishap. Han Li rubbed his finger against the lid of the cauldron, not daring to believe it. The Heavenvoid Cauldron, known to be the number one hidden treasure in the Scattered Star Seas, was now in his grasp!

Han Li attentively stared at the now fist-sized, miniature cauldron in his hand when a strange thought flickered through his mind, ‘This cauldron can’t be a fake, right?’

At that moment, Han Li’s thoughts were interrupted by a howl of mad laughter.

“Haha! With Celestial Ice Flame, Profound Soul Yin Flame, and Divine Devilbane Lightning fused together, I will be able to cultivate the Sacred Asura Flames from lore! I hadn’t guessed incorrectly. Haha....” It was clearly the Bone Sage’s voice but his voice was filled with ecstasy.

For some unknown reason, Han Li’s heart dropped and his body broke into a chill. He squinted at the small cauldron in his hand and then expressionlessly glanced at the Bone Sage.

What Han Li saw alarmed him.

The green lotus had already disappeared. In its place was the

Bone Sage with a foot-wide orb of light in his hand.

At first glance, the sphere of light appeared to be dark-green, but after further inspection, Han Li discovered a blue flame burning at its center. Although an outer layer of dark-green enveloped it, it restlessly flickered from place to place.

But even more astonishing were the black sparks of lightning that shot from the orb, producing slight rolls of thunder with each appearance.

Han Li's expression changed. Could it be that this had been the Bone Sage's plan all along?

Before Han Li could finish his thoughts and figure out the specifics of what had occurred, the Bone Sage started slowly walking towards Han Li, stopping when he was about thirty meters away.

His gaze fell onto the Heavenvoid Cauldron that Han Li was tightly grasping. With an odd expression in his eyes, he said, "Very good, it seems nothing went wrong with my plan."

When Han Li heard this, he snorted and vigilantly watched the Bone Sage in silence.

The Bone Sage smiled and leisurely said, "It looks like you've figured something out. Although I really want to give you an explanation, my time is quite limited and you're going to die soon,

so I'll just have to be satisfied with giving you an ignorant death."

Han Li's heart trembled. It couldn't be more clear that the Bone Sage wanted to kill him and take the treasure.

Disinterested in wasting the time or breath required for any verbal squabbles or nonsensical words, Han Li's expression sank, and he attempted to seize the initiative.

His raised his hand, and sent out the copper bands that he had already prepared. With a flash of colorful light, they disappeared without a trace, reappearing only a moment later to restrain the Bone Sage's neck and limbs!

Chapter 492: Divine Devilbane Lightning vs. the Sacred Asura Flame

“Restrict!” Han Li clutched his hands in an incantation gesture and sent an order to the ancient treasure.

The five copper bands suddenly tightened and firmly locked onto his limbs.

The Bone Sage revealed pain upon the clasp of the ancient treasures, but a derisive expression soon appeared on his face. “Hehe! The Five Element Bands! Although they’re rather famous ancient magic treasure, they’re entirely useless on anyone possessing mutated spiritual roots, those possessing far greater cultivation than the wielder, or fallen cultivators – like me.”

He then raised his hand without the slightest obstruction and slapped the orb of light in front of him. The orb sparkled and cracked open in a huge burst of fluttering blue flame.

A long ribbon of blue flame shot out from the orb and lightly swept past the Bone Sage’s limbs and neck, condensing a thick layer of ice on the tightly locked copper bands.

Afterwards, the Bone Sage’s body underwent a series of inconceivable twists and distortions. With a series of crisp clanks, the frozen copper bands then fell to the ground.

Han Li’s heart dropped. Without any further thought, he opened

his mouth and spat out nine small azure swords. They merged into one huge sword in the air before ruthlessly cleaving towards the Bone Sage.

The Bone Sage's face became stern upon seeing this.

He lifted the orb of light in his hands causing the tear to grow larger, causing it to spurt out a large jet of ice blue flame.

The jet of flame transformed into a five clawed dragon of translucent ice, whose entire body shined with a cold blue light. It used its two front claws to block the huge azure sword and viciously unleashed a breath of blue flame onto the sword.

After only a moment, the huge sword's brilliance greatly dimmed and a thin layer of transparent frost began to form on the sword's surface, causing the sword's movements to become sluggish.

With a roar of thunder, several arcs of golden lightning shot out from the sword, fiercely striking the ice dragon's body. The dragon was knocked back, freeing the huge sword from its constraint for the time being.

“You still want to run? Your set of Golden Lightning Bamboo swords shouldn't have much Divine Devilbane Lightning left. Let's see just how many more times you can keep it up.” The Bone Sage sinisterly grinned and pointed at the ice dragon, causing it to charge at Han Li's swords once more.

Han Li's heart stirred. Although the Bone Sage appeared unworried, Han Li could faintly perceive that the Bone Sage held some fear towards the Divine Devilbane Lightning.

Following that line of reasoning, Han Li launched a magic seal towards the huge sword. He then pointed at the sword and ordered it to intensely sway into a blur, forming an identical copy of the huge sword. This was the Azure Essence Sword Art's Swordshadow Phantasm Technique. Both of the swords simultaneously released a dense stream of faint gold lightning. One was aimed at the ice dragon with the other targeting the Bone Sage.

"Yi!" The Bone Sage cried out in amazement.

The Bone Sage was astonished. Not only did Han Li still have the strength to release such strong bolts of Devilbane Lightning, he was able of creating another huge sword.

However, this astonishment only lasted for a moment before disappearing. The Bone Sage then calmly slapped the light orb, spouting out another jet of blue flame.

This time, the ice flames wavered several times and transformed into a triangular shield of ice. The blue mist emitted from the surface of the ice shield blocked the dense bolt of Devilbane Lightning, resulting in a deadlock for a short while.

Rather than panic, Han Li rejoiced at the sight.

Although the Devilbane Lightning was unable to restrain the Celestial Ice Flames' glacial Qi, it was mutual for the flames as well. The victor of the conflict would be the side that contained the most power.

Having thought that, Han Li patted the storage pouch at his waist. A blood-red cloak appeared on his body. Although he hadn't yet reached a state of desperation, he thought it was best to be prepared for any contingencies.

Afterwards, Han Li hurriedly clasped his hands together and his expression became increasingly grave.

With rolls of thunder, an orb of faint gold lightning appeared at the center of his hands. Tiny arcs of lightning continuously sparked from its surface.

The orb of lightning was only several inches thick, but Han Li didn't stop there. Emitting the hum of electric current, the orb gradually expanded, growing several inches in the blink of an eye.

The Bone Sage controlled the Celestial Ice Flame and planned to attack the two huge azure swords, but his face paled in complete disbelief when he saw Han Li.

He could hardly believe what he was seeing. Han Li was still able to produce such a large sphere of lightning. Just how many swords of Golden Lightning Bamboo did he have?

Apprehension surged through him!

The only reason he had turned hostile was because he believed he would be able to kill Han Li without much effort, given the profound might of his newly acquired Celestial Ice Flames.

Although he had had yet to refine the ice flames into Sacred Asura Flames, he was able to barely control it with the use of his Profound Soul Yin Flames along with his own Divine Devilbane Lightning.

The Bone Sage knew that the Devilbane Lightning was able to block the glacial Qi of the Celestial Ice Flames and that Han Li possessed the ability to use it. But he hadn't expected that he would be unable to kill Han Li during this time.

The Bone Sage assessed that Han Li should've already spent a majority of his Divine Devilbane Lightning to ward off his earlier ambush during their capture of the Ninecurl Ginseng. As a result, Han Li should of been unable to block his Celestial Ice flames. After all, there wasn't enough Gold Lightning Bamboo in the world to make that many magic treasures out of it.

But that was exactly why the Bone Sage felt such disbelief at the quantity of Gold Lightning Bamboo swords that Han Li possessed!

Divine Devilbane Lightning was something that was sparingly used as it took quite some time to recover. As Han Li shouldn't have had much Devilbane Lightning in reserve, the Bone Sage took the opportunity to eliminate him!

Although he felt particularly full of loathing towards his traitorous disciple Zenith Yin, his ambitions soared after he acquired the Celestial Ice Flame. So long as he refined the Sacred Asura Flames, it was possible for him to become the hegemon of the Scattered Star Seas.

As Devilbane Lightning was the bane of Ghost Dao cultivators such as himself, Han Li, the possessor the Gold Lightning Bamboo swords, became his first target of elimination. And later, with the assistance of Man Huzi, the Bone Sage would be able to easily exterminate Zenith Yin.

The powerful streams of lightning that Han Li had released from his two swords had already been enough to surprise the Bone Sage. As for the appearance of the large sphere of golden lightning in Han Li's hands, that had left him dumbfounded.

This was entirely beyond what he had predicted!

A mere early Core Formation cultivator actually possessed countless Gold Lightning Bamboo treasures in his body. The Bone Sage felt regret, but even stronger sensations of shock and disbelief.

Just how many magic treasures of Gold Lightning Bamboo did he actually have? These swirling, inexplicable doubts formed an immense, massive weight upon his heart.

As the Bone Sage gazed on in astonishment, the sphere of

lightning in Han Li's hands grew to the size of about a meter and now floated a meter above his head. A deafening current of electricity could be heard from it.

The Bone Sage regained his bearings but his face still remained pale. His previous quantity of Divine Devilbane Lightning was nothing in comparison to this.

The Bone Sage furiously gritted his teeth and said, "Good! Very good! Although I don't know how you managed to acquire so many Gold Lightning Bamboo magic treasures, you were doomed to become the nemesis of all Ghost Dao cultivators the day they came into your possession. Today, I will have you witness the might of the Ghost Dao's Sacred Asura Flames!"

It was already too already too late for him to withdraw, so he prepared to combine the three energies to create the legendary Sacred Asura Flames. He hoped the flame would be able to break through Han Li's Divine Devilbane Lightning in a single strike and still the disturbance in his heart.

Of course, forcefully creating these sacred flames in such a short period of time was extremely dangerous. The possibility of a backlash could occur at any moment, but the Bone Sage currently had no choice.

While he had other methods for slowly whittling away at Han Li's divine methods and the ability to use both his techniques and abilities to avoid it, he didn't have the time to use them. That would either allow Han Li to escape or cause enough of a delay for the others to return.

As a result, he could only clench his teeth and revolve his hands around the orb of light. Streaks of all sorts of magic seals continuously flew into it.

At that moment, the light orb seemed alive. The blue flame at its center started to quickly rotate as the outer shell of Profound Soul Yin Flames and Black Devilbane Lightning revolved in the opposite direction.

A short moment later, the entire orb released a blinding radiance. In the following moment, countless gray embers of astonishingly cold flame wildly rushed towards Han Li with overwhelming speed.

After a moment of surprise, Han Li's face grew stern. Although he hadn't heard of this Sacred Asura Flame before, he knew it would be no less powerful than the Celestial Ice Flames.

With a grave expression, Han Li ceased pouring more lightning into the huge sphere and used his fingers to quickly form many incantation gestures as he began to mutter an incantation.

The golden ball of lightning began to stretch, transforming into a web of lightning around him.

Soon after, the embers of grey flame ruthlessly struck the gold lightning. In that instant, gold light and white flames intertwined, releasing both rolls of thunder and screeching whistles.

Chapter 493: The Bone Sage's Death

Han Li's expression became unsightly.

The web of lightning around Han Li had stopped the grey flames for the time being, but it appeared as if there was nothing that the flames couldn't burn. The lightning had already been set aflame, transforming the web of lightning into a cage of grey flame, trapping Han Li within. Now, he couldn't even escape if he wanted to.

But what worried Han Li even more was that as the grey flames burned away at the net of golden lightning, he could slowly feel the lightning contained inside his body slowly withering away.

The decaying nature of the flames gave the Sacred Asura Flames an overwhelming advantage.

The Bone Sage deeply sighed in relief and smiled. He felt confident that Han Li had no method of breaking free of the prison of grey flame.

Based on the flame's legends, the Bone Sage believed that even a Nascent Soul cultivator trapped by it would have to greatly damage their Origin Qi by using a secret technique in order to escape. Once he refined his own asura flame and restored his Nascent Soul to the peak of his cultivation, he was convinced that it would be possible for him to rule over half of the Scattered Star Seas.

With that thought, the Bone Sage let his imagination run wild. In

his eyes, Han Li was already a dead man.

The situation was growing increasingly dire!

As the golden net of lightning shrank, it eventually arrived on the verge of collapse. In response, Han Li expressionlessly spread out his palms and shot out dense arcs of golden lightning towards the net.

The seemingly unending stream of golden lightning from Han Li's palms merged with the net, causing the withering net to immediately flourish brightly once more. Not only was it restored to its original size, but it also began to astonishingly launch an unending storm of lightning against the surrounding grey flames, pushing back the flames with great momentum.

The Bone Sage's eyes widened and he nearly jumped! He now truly understood what it meant for Heaven's will to overturn man's.

The absurd amount of Divine Devilbane Lightning in Han Li's body was wreaking havoc on the Bone Sage's nerves.

Even though the Sacred Asura Flames were an existence a level above the Divine Devilbane Lightning, there was just far too much lightning. It was uncertain which would win!

The Bone Sage glared at Han Li as if he were looking at a monster.

Yet again, his mind was plagued by doubts. Just how many Gold Lightning Bamboo magic treasures does Han Li have stored in that small body of his? Was it possible that his supply of Devilbane Lightning was endless?

Just as that thought entered his mind, the Bone Sage fiercely bit down on the tip of his tongue. With sharp pain and the taste of blood, he managed to regain clarity of mind. He lightly shook his head and dismissed such absurd thoughts.

Endless amounts of Devilbane Lightning? That was obviously impossible. He was merely unsure about the quantity of Han Li's lightning.

However, the Bone Sage was convinced that with few a more bursts of lightning, Han Li was certain to run dry. When that happened, he would be able to easily kill Han Li, and take his many Gold Lightning Bamboo magic treasures for himself.

With that thought, the Bone Sage roused his spirits and fiercely gazed at Han Li with newfound greed, raising his orb of light above his head.

Earlier, the Bone Sage had only refined less than half of his Celestial Ice Flames into Asura Flames in order to reduce the odds of backlash. But it appeared that this wouldn't be enough to kill Han Li as he still had Devilbane Lightning in reserve. In order to kill Han Li in one move, he would have to refine all of his remaining Celestial Ice Flames.

He then nodded his head in approval of his thoughts and formed an incantation gesture once more. The orb of light quickly rotated, glowing once more with dazzling brilliance.

When Han Li saw this, his heart broke out into a chill.

It was as the Bone Sage had anticipated. Han Li's continuous use of the Devilbane Lightning had left it on the verge of being exhausted after having dealt with the Bone Sage's Celestial Ice and Sacred Asura Flames. Having seen the Bone Sage about to launch another attack with his Sacred Asura Flames, Han Li pondered whether or not his remaining Devilbane Lightning would be enough to break himself free.

His only option was to break through the cage of flames and flee. After all, no matter how mighty the Sacred Asura Flames were, their power meant nothing if it couldn't connect.

With that thought, Han Li came to a decision. He released the remaining Devilbane Lightning in a single, instantaneous burst, shooting out two arm-thick bolts of lightning from his hands into the net.

The gold net of lightning rapidly swayed with muffled rolls of thunder before exploding in a burst of golden brilliance. Countless arcs of golden lightning pushed back the few remaining grey flames far away.

At that moment, Han Li's body flickered several times and

reappeared about ten meters away. During that moment, Han Li was filled with apprehension.

He feared that if he wasn't careful, he would make contact with a sliver of grey flame, something that would prove to be absolutely deadly. But now that he had made it past the barrier of Sacred Asura Flames, he used his cloak without the hesitation. With a flash of blood-red light, he started to float off the ground.

He had already decided to shoot straight towards the stone stairs and have his Cloudswarm Bamboo Swords break through the barrier, allowing him to make a clean escape.

The Bone Sage guessed what Han Li intended and immediately grew anxious. He immediately surged his magic power into the light orb and quickened its transformation. With a huge rumble, the entire light orb was set alight with grey flame as if it were made completely out of Sacred Asura Flames.

But strangely, the center of the orb still had a small ball of blue light. It continuously flickered, appearing quite unstable.

The Bone Sage was initially surprised when he saw this, but he didn't take it very seriously. As his current magic power wasn't much, it wasn't particularly alarming if the transformation was incomplete..

He was currently focused on Han Li's imminent escape. Nothing he could say would stop him now.

The Bone Sage lightly beckoned to the orb of grey flames. The orb of flames lightly trembled several times and started to follow his orders to attack.

But a sudden transformation had occurred.

The remnant of blue light inside the orb suddenly flickered several times before it ruptured from the center of the orb. The orb suddenly became uneven and distorted, releasing a faint but shrieking whistle from it.

The Bone Sage was greatly frightened and hastily attempted to control the orb's distortions. He had long since forgotten that the Sacred Asura Flames wasn't something that he had truly refined. He was only able to manipulate it through the aid of external forces.

Now having encountered the disturbance of its core rupturing, the flame orb was completely unstable and had gone frantically out of control. His meager magic power didn't have the slightest effect in controlling it!

As his head was lined with sweat, the flame orb suddenly dissolved into the colors of white, green, and black, and ruptured above the Bone Sage's head, releasing countless embers of grey flame.

The Bone Sage's expression turned bloodlessly pale! He hastily started to turn his body without a thought, forming a vortex of black and green ghost Qi towards the embers in an attempt to

restrain them.

In the following instant, an arrow-like bolt of black lightning shot towards the ruptured orb in an attempt to save the Bone Sage's life.

Although the vortex of ghost Qi appeared overbearing, they melted away into nothingness upon touching the embers of grey flame to no effect.

While the embers did not fall at a fast speed, they were widely spread out over a great distance and drifted from place to place. But he should still be able to run from them, if just barely!

When Han Li witnessed this reversal, he immediately changed his mind. He made use of the opportunity to shoot out ten streaks of Azure Essence Swordlight from his fingertips and blocked the Bone Sage's path of escape.

The Bone Sage inwardly cursed with alarm and fury.

He was too preoccupied at that moment to dodge! He could only cross his arms in front of him with gritted teeth and emit a thin layer of green Qi before charging forwards.

Just before a streak of azure light struck him, he shot out a black streak of light from his mouth, his magic treasure – the Gold Lightning Bamboo arrow. After striking the fifth streak of azure light, it was knocked to the side. As for the rest of the sword

streaks, the Bone Sage directly received them with his arms.

Five muffled explosions sounded out.

The Bone Sage had clearly underestimated the might of Han Li's Azure Essence Swordlight. Although he managed to repel the first four streaks of azure swordlight, the last strike had broken through his green Qi and struck his true body, pushing him back by several steps.

In that moment, the Bone Sage's mind froze in terror! With a faceful of panic, he hastily reached to take something out from his robes. But before that happened, a miniscule, faint ember of grey flame had landed on his shoulder.

Woosh. Grey flame wildly ignited.

Without even the slightest scream, the Bone Sage's body succumbed to the flames, leaving nothing but drifting ash behind.

Chapter 494: Celestial Ice Pearl

Han Li felt his blood run cold and his face trembled upon witnessing the ferocity of the Asura Flames.

After the grey flames incinerated the Bone Sage, they condensed into a delicate ember and flew off.

For some unknown reason, the Bone Sage's death had caused a strange transformation in the Asura Flames. All of the grey embers simultaneously released a thread of dark green Qi along with a spark of black lightning, turning the embers blue in an instant. The embers appeared to have returned to their original form as Celestial Ice Flames.

Han Li suddenly felt his surroundings compress, as the air filled with blue glacial Qi. The glacial Qi started to cover the ground in thin layer of ice, spreading to the rest of the area within the light barrier.

Han Li turned pale from fright at the sudden onslaught of cold and wildly poured spiritual power into the White Rhino Emblem. A scorching white light was emitted that repelled the cold Qi, barring it from approaching his body.

It seemed the Celestial Ice Flame's true capabilities were only displayed after the Bone Sage had lost control. In only a short moment, the entire surface of the stone platform had been covered in a sheet of frost. Han Li's barrier of white light barely managed to protect him, but it massively drained his magic power, causing

him to bitterly curse.

Han Li now understood that the Bone Sage's Celestial Ice Flames were weakened from either his shallow cultivation or a lack of time to refine them. This would explain why he had only been able to use a fraction of its true power a moment ago.

Had the Bone Sage displayed this fearsome power with his Celestial Ice Flames from the start, he would've been able to kill Han Li several times over without having any need to refine the Asura Flames. In addition, it is likely that the true power of the Asura Flames hadn't been displayed either. Its power had probably only reached a tenth of its potential!

As these domineering thoughts entered his mind, he had nearly deduced the entire truth of the matter. Regardless, he wasn't about to let himself foolishly meet his end by the masterless Celestial Ice Flames after having put so much effort into eliminating the Bone Sage.

At that moment, he grit his teeth and reached for the spirit beast pouch at his waist. He was going to release the Gold Devouring Beetle's and see whether or not they could increase his odds of survival.

The still immature Gold Devouring Beetles were certain to be unable to resist the fearsome chill, but Han Li didn't have many options left to keep his life.

Han Li's palm moved and just as he was about to open the spirit

beast pouch a sudden change occurred.

The floating blue embers throughout the room suddenly flickered several times before releasing a clear ringing sound. They seemed to have received some sort of command and started to shoot towards the sky, condensing into a single solid form.

A short moment later, a shining blue light sphere appeared in the sky. As soon as this fist-sized blue ice pearl had appeared, the fantastical chill within the stone platform instantly disappeared as if it had never been there.

Having already opened his spirit beast pouch halfway, Han Li was dumbfounded, but he soon found himself overwhelmed with delighted surprise. Regardless of what strange transformations the Celestial Ice Flames underwent, he could now safely make his escape.

At that moment, the blue ice pearl slowly floated down from the sky and stopped in front of Han Li.

Han Li looked at the ice pearl with a strange expression. After some contemplation, he reached out his hand and shot a bolt of the remnant lightning at it. After winding around the ice pearl for a moment, the pearl had been restrained and obediently entered the lightning's control with no further surprises.

Han Li's expression grew solemn. He didn't dare to be overly confident, and carefully flicked his wrist, having the golden lightning slowly draw the ice pearl towards him.

He had the pearl stop about a foot away from him, and looked at it with trepidation. With his hand firmly covered in azure light, he carefully reached out to it.

Although his hand was still covered in dense true essence, Han Li could feel a slight chill through it. It seemed that after the Celestial Ice Flames had condensed into this pearl, its glacial qi had been completely sealed.

As such, Han Li breathed a sigh of relief and dispersed the light surrounding his hand. He grabbed the pearl with three fingers and carefully examined it.

The blue pearl's exterior was solid blue crystal while its interior consisted of raging flames.

Han Li hesitated for a moment. This Celestial Ice Pearl was a treasure that had scarcely, if ever, appeared in this world. It could be considered a treasure even more valuable than the Heavenvoid Cauldron.

Although he didn't know how this ice-fire pearl could be refined or used, it was something that he absolutely couldn't discard. After having witnessed the viciousness of the Azure Sun Devil Fire and the Heavenwide Corpse Fire, Han Li found himself desiring a powerful flame of his own. And even better, the Celestial Ice Flame's power was even greater than the previous flames he had witnessed.

With this, he would be able to fulfill his long desire of possessing some truly ferocious flames. Although attempting to use and acquire it possessed a certain degree of danger, Han Li was more than willing to brave the risk.

With that thought, Han Li shot out a spark of gold lightning and wrapped the ice pearl in successive layers of lightning. A short moment later, he held the lightning-clad pearl in his hand while sparks of lightning occasionally arced off the ball. The result set Han Li's mind at ease.

If the ice pearl was to rupture once more, the cover of Devilbane Lightning would be able to buy him enough time to wrest control over it. After having just battled against these very flames, he was completely confident that the Divine Devilbane Lightning could restrain them if need be. There would be no fear of any sudden backlash.

However, he had now truly exhausted the reserve of Devilbane Lightning inside his body. Not even a spark remained.

However, Han Li couldn't bring himself to care as he put the pearl inside a square jade box and properly placed it away.

At that moment, Han Li finally had the chance to take a breath and make a quick flight to the altar. He placed his over exhausted Bloodjade Spider into his spirit beast pouch. As for the refined spider corpse, it had long stopped moving.

Han Li couldn't help but stop when he arrived at where the Bone

Sage perished. With an astonished expression, he waved his hand. An item that faintly shone with white light flew into his hand from within the ashes.

It turned out to be a flawless white gem that was several inches long. After sizing it up for a moment, he recognized it to be the Bone Sage's rib bone.

Han Li was quite amazed to find that it had been completely unharmed by the Sacred Asura Flames.

When he had first seen it inside the Bone Sage's prison, the rib bone had contained the map of Heavenvoid Hall.

‘Could it be that the rib bone holds other items as well?’ After some further thought, Han Li placed it into his storage pouch. Now was not the time to examine his spoils as his escape and survival were the far more urgent matters at hand.

Just as Han Li flew towards the steps, he unexpectedly found a dormant emerald-green arrow on the ground.

Han Li frowned and waved his hand, sweeping the treasure into his grasp with a streak of azure light.

After a casual inspection, Han Li placed the arrow into his bag, but a strange ringing then unexpectedly sounded out from within his spirit beast pouch.

Han Li's heart stirred, and he couldn't help but be his surprised.

After frowning with some deliberation, he suddenly slapped his storage pouch. A streak of light circled around him before revealing itself to be the soul devouring Weeping Soul Beast.

Han Li opened his mouth and spat out the grey pearl used to control it, the Weeping Soul Pearl.

Han Li had found the circumstances from when Yuan Yao handed this beast over to him to be quite strange. As a result, he hadn't refined the control pearl. However, it was still an easy matter to erase her lingering spiritual sense from the pearl and exert control over the Weeping Soul Beast.

As he held onto the Weeping Soul Pearl, he stared at the small emerald-green arrow and suddenly opened his mouth. An azure ball of core flame enveloped the arrow and started to slowly refine it.

At first the arrow didn't reveal the slightest reaction as if it were truly dead.

A cold glint then flashed through Han Li's eyes. After licking his lips, he threw the arrow into the air and gave the Weeping Soul Beast a command. The beast suddenly snorted and shot out a yellow mist, enveloping the small arrow.

The small arrow had originally stayed still, but upon seeing the

yellow mist, it flashed with green light several times, enveloping itself in a streak of green radiance accompanied by a sharp whistle. The arrow then shot directly towards the stone stairs as if it were terrified by the yellow mist.

Chapter 495: Mysterious Scroll Painting

Han Li had already been prepared for the arrow to attempt to escape. Within the arrow's first few meters of flight, Han Li shot out an azure swordstreak that intercepted it, causing it to tumble.

In that opening, the Weeping Soul Beast wrapped the small arrow in a yellow radiance, causing the magic treasure to incessantly flash. The arrow dashed back and forth within the cage of light as if wanting to escape, but the yellow light appeared immensely more powerful than it. No matter how much the arrow struggled, it was unable to escape. This was to be expected of the beast that was known to be the bane of all ghosts.

As the small arrow's resistance grew weaker, yellow threads shot out from the cage of light and tightly bound the small arrow in an instant. The yellow threads then grew taut and dragged out a ball of green light from within the small arrow.

The green light was ensnared by many yellow threads and incessantly transformed into all sorts of animals and insects as well as fluctuating in size in its attempt to break free. Despite its efforts, it was unable to escape from the yellow threads and was gradually drawn closer and closer to the Weeping Soul Beast's nose.

At that moment, the green light grew panicked and transformed into the face of an old man. The light loudly pleaded towards Han Li, "Young Friend Han, I beg you to let me go. So long as you spare my life, I will willingly serve you for the rest of my life. The number of strange and secret techniques I know are countless, and I am willing to give you all of them! Moreover, doesn't Young

Friend Han wish to learn the entirety of the Profound Yin Arts? I didn't even teach the last few layers to my traitorous disciple Zenith Yin. Doesn't Fellow Daoist Han also wish to know about the wonders of Profound Soul Demonification? Although my own estate had been seized by Zenith Yin, I still have many secret cave dwellings, each containing their own hidden treasures. This old servant is willing to fully devote himself to you..."

The more the ghostly face spoke, the quicker the words came out and the more panicked it appeared. He even took the initiative to offer to become a servant because at that moment, he was only about a foot away from the Weeping Soul Beast's nose.

If he were to truly be absorbed by the beast, even if his soul were more tenacious, he would never be able to escape.

Despite having a will far more staunch and unwavering than others, Han Li's heart thumped upon hearing the Bone Sage's offers, and his face revealed a trace of hesitation.

Perhaps due to having seen Han Li's hesitation, the ghost revealed his greatest trump card with a low roar, "Even if Fellow Daoist Han doesn't want those things, don't you want to know the weaknesses of Zenith Yin's cultivation arts? And how about removing the tracing mark he placed on your body?"

Han Li's gaze flickered several times and his expression continuously shifted. He sighed and lightly waved his hand, causing the radiance encasing the Bone Sage to grow still, preventing him from continuing towards the Weeping Soul Beast's nose.

The thread-bound ghost rejoiced and sighed with relief, “Young Friend Han, you are truly wise! By sparing this old man...” The ghost face forced a smile and intended to ingratiate himself to Han Li.

But when the Bone Sage was about to continue, the Weeping Soul Beast snorted and resumed sucking in the Bone Sage. With his guard now down, he was sucked in without the slightest resistance.

At that moment, Han Li wore a cold sneer.

The Weeping Soul Beast burped as if it was quite satisfied with his meal and clumsily patted its stomach.

With a faint smile, Han Li shook the Weeping Soul Pearl in his hand and returned the beast to his storage pouch.

Han Li walked forward with the small green arrow now in his grasp. As he gazed at it, he muttered, “You want to be my servant? How could I possibly choose to act against my own interests?! You lived for over a thousand years! It would already be baseless flattery to say that I could possibly stand to outscheme you. Killing you now will save me quite a bit trouble. Who knows when you would betray me.”

Even now, Han Li was unable to understand whether the ghost had been the Bone Sage’s true soul or a soul shard that he had split off earlier! Han Li wouldn’t be surprised if Ghost Daoists had such

soul splitting techniques.

After Han Li picked up the Five Element Bands that were lying nearby, and lingered for a moment. The ghost face had reminded him of the marker that Zenith Yin had placed on him. If he didn't figure out how to remove it, he might be detected immediately after he left the barrier.

Han Li had already examined himself several times with his spiritual sense, but hadn't been able to find the slightest trace. However, Han Li still had another way to look for any markings. Otherwise, he wouldn't have so rashly exterminated the ghost.

Han Li released several thousand Gold Devouring Beetles into the air and had them crawl all over his body.

After a short moment, a few of the Gold Devouring Beetles on his lower leg released a peculiar shriek.

Han Li rejoiced and issued the command. The Gold Devouring Beetles on his leg became restless for a moment, before they all returned to his spirit beast pouch. Han Li then flew towards the stone steps without further delay.

He felt that he had tarried for far too long and was on edge with fear.

He traveled the hundred meters down the stairs in the blink of an eye. Han Li then opened his mouth and spat out a streak of blue

light, cleaving open a three meter hole in the light barrier with his Bamboo Cloudswarm Sword. He then shot out of the hole in a streak of light.

According to his calculations, his best bet would be to stealthily return to the first or second floor and enter one of the doors. Afterwards, he would break the restrictions on the secret room and return to Heavenvoid Hall. As for the rooms on the other floors, they were far too dangerous for him.

Han Li shot along the path he remembered in complete silence. On his way back, the restrictions and puppets had all been long since eliminated. Apart from being careful about avoiding the old devils, he didn't have any other worries, and flew as boldly as he could.

Because Han Li could see the path ahead with his spiritual sense, he took out the shabby scroll he had acquired from the hollow wall and decided to use the time to read it.

“Yi!”

After taking several quick glances at it, he couldn't help but yell in shock and slow down, despite having planned to rush through the passageway. The scroll didn't appear exceptional and didn't contain the slightest spiritual power. Rather, the scroll contained a rather crude and simple drawing, depicting a vague map.

After Han Li studied it several times, he immediately recognized it to be a map of the fifth floor of the Inner Halls.

Needless to say, there was a drawing of a stone platform along with a cauldron that had two handles and three legs at the very top. This was clearly a picture of the Heavenvoid Cauldron. There was also a crossed marking in front of it that was certain to be indicating a secret room!.

But what shocked Han Li the most were the passageways that were traced with bright red ink, standing out from the rest of the black ink map. The route led to a picture of a high wall with a transportation formation behind it.

According to Han Li's original plan, he would return to the first or second floor and pray that he wouldn't encounter any of the old devils along the way. If this map was accurate, then couldn't he just use the transportation formation it showed to leave this place? Even if it didn't take him outside of the Heavenvoid Hall, it would almost certainly be much safer than foolishly forcing his way through the fifth floor.

Han Li was more specifically tempted by how close he already was to the marked path. He was only an intersection away from entering the red lined path.

However, his sole worry was whether or not he would encounter any restrictions or puppets along the way. He had no worries towards the validity of the map. How could it possibly be fake? Not only was it hidden behind a hollow wall, but it seemed to be as old as the Heavenvoid Hall itself. Who would spend so much effort just to play a joke?

After extended period of indecision, Han Li arrived at the intersection. He continuously glanced around as he was still unsure of what path to take.

‘Whatever! If I come across any dangers, at worst, I’ll just return to the previous path. According to the map, the route isn’t very long. As such, it should prove much safer than returning to the previous floor.’ Moreover, he didn’t believe that the map would mark out a route for escape that would include many dangers along its path.

With that thought, Han Li spread out his arms. Many lights flashed around him to reveal a crowd of huge ape puppets. Under his command, they immediately set forth down the passage as he closely followed after them with a solemn expression.

Chapter 496: A Gorgeous Woman and a Spirit Well

Much to Han Li's surprise, the path revealed by the map he found hidden within a wall had been peaceful. He didn't encounter any restrictions or puppets guards as he followed the map and eventually arrived at the tall wall without any trouble.

After looking at this common stone wall, Han Li unfolded the aged scroll and carefully examined it once more.

"This is the place." Han Li muttered to himself with certainty. He emitted streaks of azure swordlight from the fingers of one of his hands and directly walked towards the stone wall.

Han Li rejoiced upon seeing there were no restrictions on the wall, and as he had hoped, the wall was hollow. He used his fingers to cut open a three-meter-wide circle with great ease, and gently pushed it with his other hand, revealing a large hole with a dark interior.

The swordlight on his fingers disappeared with a shake of his hand. He then summoned a ball of white light in his palm and had it slowly enter the room.

Without any further hesitation, he nimbly leapt in after it.

The hidden room was only about six meters tall and about fifteen meters wide. Although the entire room was covered by a thick

layer of dust, there was also a very crude transportation formation at the center of the room.

The transportation formation was drawn with crooked lines, and its talisman markings were as crudely drawn as if it were a poor imitation of a formation by an unskilled layman.

Han Li wrinkled his brow. Could it be that the formation was incapable of being used or that it had been long since discarded? He took a step forward and inspected the formation using his own knowledge on spell formations. After a short while, he let out a long sigh.

Although the formation spell was crude, it could still be used. Furthermore, it didn't seem to be a long distance transportation formation. It would likely take him to a place that should seem at least somewhat familiar.

Han Li took out several spirit stones and quickly placed them on the four sides of the formation. After a series of hums, the spell formation shined with faint light. Han Li smiled at the sight. Instead of hastily using the formation, he turned his head to look at the hole in the wall and pondered for a moment.

He approached the wall and cast several minor restoration magic techniques, returning the fallen stone to the open wall. In the blink of an eye, the wall had returned to its original appearance. Han Li dusted off his hands and walked into the spell formation before disappearing in a flash of white light.

A moment later, Han Li reappeared in a thin mist. The mist was warm and carried a floral scent.

About three meters ahead of him, there was a milky white pond that spanned over thirty meters. The pond seemed to be the source of the white mist and fragrant odor.

What stunned him wasn't that, but the naked woman that was crouched at the pond. She seemed to have been enjoying the water.

The amazing sight of her lustrous, flawless body and her long, shiny black hair caused Han Li to unconsciously swallow, putting his mind into a daze. But when he saw her incredulous expression, Han Li bitterly smiled.

After bluntly taking a long look at the woman's body with a strange expression, he spoke without the slightest hint of sincerity, "Lady Yuan, what a coincidence! You've also arrived here. However, it seems I've appeared at an unsuitable time.

The naked woman in the pond was actually the beauty Yuan Yao that had disappeared into the Inner Halls.

At that moment, Yuan Yao was in shock at Han Li's sudden appearance. When she heard him speak, she suddenly awoke and her face flushed red.

She hastily used her hands to cover her ample figure and flusteredly yelled, "How did you get here! The transportation

formation shouldn't be in any condition to be used. You.... quickly! Turn around!" Yuan Yao appeared to be both startled and embarrassed.

After chuckling, Han Li didn't reply and casually walked back to the transportation formation and examined his surroundings.

It was a stone room that spanned over a hundred meters and had a stone gate at either end. Alongside the pond across from Han Li, black clothes and several storage pouches lay in a pile at its shore.

When Han Li's gaze fell onto the back wall, he spotted a white jade sculpture of a dragon head mounted ten meters up on the wall. About a meter below the sculpture there was a recess that shined with green light coming from a jade bottle with a long neck. It appeared to contain something valuable.

When Yuan Yao saw that Han Li spotted that jade bottle, she had forgotten about her embarrassment and revealed shock. However, Han Li turned a blind eye to the bottle and immediately turned his gaze. He instead walked towards the edge of the pond and lowered his head to look at the milky white water. Yuan Yao inwardly sighed and her expression returned to normal. However, her beautiful eyes glinted with a strange light as if she had thought of something.

At that moment, Han Li suddenly thought of something and swept his hand across the surface of the pond. Han Li easily cupped some of the water into his hand and brought it towards his eye.

The pond water was extreme fragrant and was filled with pure Heaven-Earth Qi. But after a short moment, he saw the fragrant Qi disappear from the water, turning back into regular water.

Han Li's expression stirred. Han Li tossed the water away in his hand and said, "A spirit well spring! I truly didn't expect for the master of Heavenvoid Hall to have placed such a large spirit well here. Could it be that Lady Yuan Yao had braved such great danger for that reason?" He then calmly turned his gaze towards her.

At that moment, Yuan Yao had recovered her calm, but when she saw Han Li sweep his gaze past her bare shoulders, she couldn't help but lower her body and angrily reply, "Humph! Is that how Fellow Daoist Han speaks to a woman? Could it be that you still haven't seen enough of my naked body?"

Even with her beautiful face warped by anger, she still appeared quite graceful.

She was truly the most outstanding beauty of a generation! As Han Li's gaze focused on the woman's appearance, his heart was set alight.

Although he had managed to keep his mind clear and free of desires, he was still a man. Despite being uninterested in forcing any disgraceful and unbecoming acts, he couldn't help but feast his eyes on the beautiful scene before him, and found himself wanting to make fun of her words.

As Han Li sat at the edge of the water, he took off his boots and

boldly stepped into the water. He leisurely teased, “If Lady Yuan wishes to wear clothes, please don’t hesitate! I won’t stop you in the slightest. However, if there is an opportunity to see such an amazing beauty, please don’t expect me to act as a cultured gentleman. As such, I will be taking a look.” With that said, Han Li smilingly stared at the blushing woman with chin in hand.

“You...” Yuan Yao’s face was scarlet. She thought to say something, but with a roll of her eyes, her beautiful face immediately returned to normal. With a charming smile, she chuckled and said, “Hehe, I had believed Fellow Daoist to be an uncultured brute without any understanding towards the fairer sex! I hadn’t expected Fellow Daoist Han to understand such charms. As a great kindness, I will allow you to enjoy the sight of this young woman’s body for a moment. However, the sight of a naked body can’t be considered much to us cultivators. Therefore, I will be coming out to put on some clothes.”

With that said, she shyly raised her hand from the water and lightly brushed her hair. She then seductively smiled at Han Li, revealing an amorous allure from her flawless beauty.

Han Li’s mind grew blank as if he had been captivated by her.

In that instant, Yuan Yao gracefully struck the water, causing a curtain of white mist to emerge in front of her, blocking her entirely from Han Li’s sight.

She took that opportunity to fly out of the water and shoot straight towards her clothes and items. A cloud of black Qi then emerged from her body, blocking her once more from sight. Once

the black Qi disappeared, Yuan Yao was revealed to be fully dressed as she gently floated to the ground.

At some unknown time, the long jade bottle from underneath the statue had disappeared.

Chapter 497: Myriad Year Spirit Milk and Soul Nurturing Tree

The screen of white mist thinned and Han Li looked at the woman with restored calm.

Han Li muttered, “It is truly a pity that I can no longer enjoy such a view.”

When Yuan Yao heard this, she blushed before delicately chuckling, “Didn’t Brother Han go to the fifth floor with those masters? How did you arrive here?” After she said that, she caressed her wet hair and it dried in an instant with a flicker of white light. A few strands of dark hair fell in front of her face, a stark contrast against her snow-white skin that served to illuminate her beauty.

Han Li enjoyed the sight as this woman was among the greatest beauties he had ever seen. Each and every one of her movements were enough to ensnare any man.

After taking several glances at her graceful appearance, he calmly said, “I merely triggered a restriction and ended up teleporting here. I wish to ask for guidance from Lady Yuan. What is this place?”

“Triggered a restriction?” Yuan Yao’s eyes shifted and she wore a mysterious smile. It was clear she didn’t believe Han Li, but Han Li paid her doubt no mind. He merely chuckled and indifferently stared at her in silence.

Yuan Yao's face slightly reddened. This pest Han Li was truly giving her a headache, as she was keenly aware of her inability to deal with him. Not only had she witnessed the fearsomeness of Han Li's insects, but even the charming techniques of an expert such as herself had little effect against him.

She furrowed her slender brow and could only helplessly respond, "This is a secret room on the second floor. You came out of such a shabby transportation formation? Had I known this were possible, I would've smashed it to pieces and prevented myself from having to deal with you." With that said, Yuan Yao glared at Han Li with obvious annoyance. It appeared she still felt aggrieved at having her naked body seen.

Han Li remained completely unperturbed as if he hadn't heard her. Instead, he lazily stretched his back and emerged from the water before putting his shoes back on. In the short time he had spent in the water, he had restored a portion of his magic power. Although he wished to spend more time there, he felt it would be in his best interest to leave Heavenvoid Hall as soon as possible.

As a result, Han Li no longer paid any attention to Yuan Yao and walked towards the south exit of the room.

When he arrived at the exit, he saw a mess. There was large stone room with a completely fragmented puppet lying on the ground, surrounded by holes. It was clear that Yuan Yao had fought a bitter battle here.

There was a gate on the other side of the room. A familiar white light sparkled from it, appearing to be exactly the same as the other gates from the Inner Halls.

Han Li hesitated for a moment before walking towards it. After looking at it for a moment, he took out his Heavenvoid map fragment and poured spiritual power into it before slapping it onto the door. As a result, the door flickered with white light, but did nothing else.

Han Li sighed. As expected, using the map fragment to leave wasn't possible. He wondered whether or not he possessed the skill to break open the restriction. As he was unable to come up with a solution, he started heading towards the north exit.

Yuan Yao's gaze fell upon Han Li. After a moment of thought, she coldly said, "What are you doing? That gate has a formidable formation spell. It isn't something that an ordinary cultivator can destroy. Could it be you wish to break it and seize the treasure within?"

Just as Han Li arrived at the other exit, without turning his head, he asked, "I wish to leave Heavenvoid Hall! Does Fellow Daoist Yuan have a better method?"

Yuan Yao's eyes brightly flickered in thought before a peculiar expression appeared on her face. "None! However, this young woman fancies the treasure here. Would Fellow Daoist Han be interested in going treasure hunting with me?"

As he stared at the colorful mist surrounding the exit, he bluntly said, “Hunt treasure? It seems Fellow Daoist Yuan has already spent some time here. If you are truly able to break through the restrictions here, then wouldn’t you have done so earlier?”

Yuan Yao blushed, but her expression soon grew serious as she adopted a stubborn attitude, “I’ve already spent the day researching it. In about four days, I will be certain to break through the formation!”

When Han Li heard this, he turned around with astonishment and looked at the woman with narrowed eyes.

Yuan Yao felt restless. After some time, she eventually conceded, “Fine! I’ll admit that if I were to attempt to break the formation spell alone, it is possible that the Heavenvoid Hall would close before I succeeded. However, if Fellow Daoist Han were to aid me, it would take far less time.”

Han Li silently stood in place without a change of expression and waited for her to continue, confident that the beauty still had more to say.

As Yuan Yao stared at Han Li, she slowly said, “However, before the formation is broken, this young woman would like to reach an agreement with you.”

“What agreement? Tell me.” Han Li crossed his arms and attentively gazed at her.

“So long as Brother Han is willing to renounce the treasure inside, I will be willing to compensate you!”

“Compensate?” Han Li remained expressionless as he continued to watch her.

Yuan Yao revealed hesitation. After lowering her head and muttering to herself for a moment, she raised her head with a resolute expression. She solemnly said, “I am willing to hand over a bit of Myriad Year Spirit Milk as compensation. What does Brother Han think?”

Han Li’s expression stirred. “Myriad Year Spirit Milk? Legend says that only a small mouthful would be able to restore one’s magic power in an instant. It is said that even ten thousand spirit stones cannot buy even a single drop of it. That spirit milk?”

Yuan Yao stared at Han Li with bright eyes and slowly said, “That’s right. Since I trust you, I’ve taken the risk to tell you. There is no way that Brother Han would kill this young lady over treasure, yes?”

After traveling together with Han Li through the ghost mist and the Paths of Fire and Ice, Yuan Yao recognized that while Han Li wasn’t an upright gentleman, neither was he a ruthless and vicious wretch. Of course, if she possessed any other treasures that could entice Han Li, she would have mentioned them instead.

Although she thought it wasn’t likely for Han Li to attack her, her hands still casually fell to the storage pouches at her waist.

Although she knew she wasn't Han Li's match, she still had a few mighty life-saving treasures that could protect her against any foul intentions Han Li might have. This was precisely why she had dared to mention the spirit milk in the first place.

Han Li rubbed his nose and remained silent. Then, he turned his head towards the dragon head statue with a contemplative expression.

Yuan Yao's tone turned soft as she said, "It seems Brother Han has figured it out. My Myriad Year Spirit Milk was something that had been accumulated in the spirit spring for over ten thousand years. But with this, Fellow Daoist Han should know that I am not deceiving him!"

Han Li calmly nodded his head. "That's right. With such a large spirit spring being so cleverly hidden, it's reasonable that a bit of spirit milk was produced."

Yuan Yao's expression blossomed and her eyes brightly shined. "So what does Fellow Daoist Han think?"

Han Li looked at Yuan Yao with a chilling, ice-cold gaze and asked, "Could Young Lady Yuan tell me what treasure is concealed within? Since Fellow Daoist Yuan is so willing to pay me such an exorbitant price, then the treasure must be worth even more."

When Yuan Yao saw Han Li's expression, for some unknown reason, she felt a chill run down her spine and she began to panic.

“Brother Han is quite funny! This is the first time this young woman has been here, so how could I know what lies inside? Brother Han is quite suspicious! ... Fine, fine! I’ll tell the truth. I know what the treasure inside is. Although its worth is about equivalent to the Myriad Year Spirit Milk, it is far more important to me. That is why I was willing to give the spirit milk to you. The treasure is an unrefined Soul Nurturing Tree!” Yuan Yao had initially attempted to play it off as a joke, but when she saw Han Li’s gaze grow colder, she hastily revealed the truth. For some unknown reason, she felt trepidation and fear at the thought of their relations turning hostile.

Han Li was stunned for quite some time before asking in amazement, “One of the three divine woods, capable of being worn on the body and nourishing the primal spirit to slowly strengthen one’s spiritual sense?”

After some thought, her expression sank and she softly said, “That’s the one. However, I am not interested in the soul nurturing effects, but rather its ability to preserve and house one’s soul, preventing their spiritual sense from scattering.”

“Spirit Nurturing Wood and Myriad Year Spirit Milk!” Han Li stared at the ceiling as he muttered to himself.

Chapter 498: Distinguishing the Truth

Han Li turned towards Yuan Yao and leisurely said, “So that’s why there was a spirit spring placed here. It was to nourish the tree. I do desire the Myriad Year Spirit Milk, but the Soul Nourishing Tree is also quite interesting.”

Upon hearing that, Yuan Yao’s expression instantly became ice-cold.

“Relax. Having so many years of rich nourishment, the tree can’t be small. And I only want a portion of its roots. I won’t fight over the trunk, the most important part of the tree.”

Yuan Yao’s expression softened, but her eyes contained a trace of doubt, “You only want the roots?”

Han Li said with a blank expression, “Naturally, I also want the Myriad Year Spirit Milk that you offered to me earlier as well.”

Yuan Yao’s eyes slightly shifted as she made her own conclusions about Han Li’s intentions. She sweetly chuckled, “Hehe! Brother Han is quite shrewd. The Soul Nourishing Tree’s roots will certainly fetch a high price from many sects. Regardless, I will agree to those terms.”

Even with this, she was still relieved.

Han Li smiled and offered no further explanation.

Yuan Yao chuckled, “Let us start on breaking through the formation. I’ll give Fellow Daoist Han an explanation of what I’ve learned about the formation spell.” It seemed as though she was in even more of a hurry than Han Li.

“Before we start, I must ask whether or not Lady Yuan plans on taking the spirit spring.” Han Li pointed to the pond with a mysterious smile.

Yuan Yao coquettishly said, “Is Brother Han joking? This spirit spring has been bonded with the entire Inner Halls by the Master of Heavenvoid Hall using profound restrictions. Had I possessed the ability to take it, I would’ve directly aimed for the Heavenvoid Cauldron instead of hiding down here.”

When Han Li heard this, he appeared slightly disappointed, but after some thought, he broke out into laughter.

It seems he had become far too greedy. Upon spotting a treasure, he thought to immediately acquire it. This was not a good omen. If this were to continue, he would likely meet his death as a result of greed.

With that thought, Han Li steadied his mind before continuing with a solemn voice, “Fellow Daoist Yuan should hand over the spirit milk first before we start talking about the formation spell. With our combined efforts, we’ll be able to break through the formation in no more than two days.

When Yuan Yao heard this, her sweet smile was replaced with a ghastly expression.

...

Two days later about twenty kilometers away from Heavenvoid Hall, a man and woman emerged from a flash of white light above the sea.

The man appeared quite ordinary. Apart from his clear eyes, there was nothing exceptional about his appearance. As for the woman, she was as dainty as a flower, and her bright, lively eyes suggested that her grace was limitless. When the two emerged, they vigilantly examined their surroundings. Upon seeing that there were no other cultivators nearby, they both let out a sigh of relief.

The pair were Han Li and Yuan Yao, who had broken through the formation of the secret room.

Yuan Yao gazed in the the direction of Heavenvoid Hall with an odd expression, “It seems the others are still trapped in Heavenvoid Hall. They won’t be coming out for some time.”

“Would those Nascent Soul Eccentrics do the same as us and seize treasure to escape the halls?” Han Li hadn’t relaxed his guard and frowned.

Yuan Yao casually brushed her hair and softly said, “Be at ease,

after acquiring the treasure, one will be teleported to a random location, it can be anywhere from next to Heavenvoid Hall to several hundred kilometers away. It is impossible for anyone to be monitoring such an expansive area.”

“Good!” Han Li nodded his head with peace of mind.

Yuan Yao blinked at him and she probingly asked, “What? Could it be that Brother Han has offended those Nascent Soul eccentrics? If that’s the case, then you had best be careful.”

“Fellow Daoist Yuan need not worry herself about me. As I have matters I must attend to, I will be taking my leave first.” Han Li expressionlessly cupped his hands to Yuan Yao and shot across the sky as a streak of azure light. He displayed neither reluctance to leave nor any desire to hear her response.

When Yuan Yao saw Han Li abruptly fly off, she was flabbergasted. After a long while, she eventually shook her head. She then extended her hand and summoned a foot-long block of wood with a flash of black light.

The wood was rough and scorched, appearing ugly by all means. But when Yuan Yao looked at it, she revealed sadness.

“Big Sister Yan, please wait just a few more days. I will find someone to refine this wood into a Soulkeeper Box and help you escape having your soul refined.” After she softly said this, she donned her hood, concealing her astonishing beauty, and transformed into a cloud of Black Qi before flying off in another

direction.

In the blink of an eye, the sea became calm once more.

...

Meanwhile, several people solemnly stood on the platform of the fifth floor of Heavenvoid Hall with unsightly expressions. They were the six Nascent Soul cultivators who had apparently come to some sort of agreement, as Man Huzi was standing there without being attacked.

“We’ve already searched every corner of the third, fourth and fifth floors. Even after breaking through countless restrictions and puppets, we’ve yet to find any sign of them. Zenith Yin, two of the three have a deep relationship with you. Did you not instruct them to seize the treasure and escape?” Wan Tianming spoke with an ashen expression.

Zenith Yin’s cheek twitched and his face grimaced. “Humph! Sect Master Wan, you’ve already asked that several times and my reply is still that my grandson has met his end. As I personally used a secret technique to search for him, I cannot be mistaken. Were it not for the obstruction of the Tailstar Formation, I would’ve felt the instant my grandson perished and would’ve prevented those other two youngsters from running off with the treasure.”

Zenith Yin stared at Man Huzi and gloomily said, “With that said, I personally believe Man Huzi to be the most suspicious. Why did Man Huzi draw us away for enough time for the Heavenvoid

Cauldron to be seized? Man Huzi is also unwilling to reveal the history behind that junior of his. Could it be that you colluded with that youngster beforehand?”

Man Huzi glared back at him and bluntly mocked him, “Ridiculous, what do I have to reveal to you? What do I have to do with that youngster running off with the Heavenvoid Cauldron? I was busy escaping from everyone, but that isn’t enough evidence to say that I helped him. Rather, you claim that Wu Chou is dead; who’s to say that’s true? Perhaps you are actually filled to the brim with happiness.”

“You...” Zenith Yin was seething with anger. His beloved grandson had died, and now he was being made out to be a scapegoat. He wasn’t about to take this silently. But when he was about to engage in a furious argument, Qing Yi interrupted him in an attempt to alleviate tensions.

“Brother Man and Brother Wu have no reason to dispute. The ones who took the treasure were amongst those three. As for who it was, what do we care? That’s secondary. What is most important is that we find them, regardless of if they are alive or dead. As of now, we’ve already setup a formation at the entrance to the the third floor, preventing them from escaping. Breaking into any of the secret rooms above the second floor is an impossibility for them. As they are all only early Core Formation cultivators, even if the three of them joined hands, they would be incapable of progressing through a room on the third floor or higher. Unless of course, they’ve lost their heads and decided to commit suicide in the attempt.”

“However, we’ve searched the entirety of floors three through five without finding even a trace.” Wan Tianming coldly said with a suspicious expression.

It wasn’t just him; all three of the Righteous Dao cultivators were skeptical.

They had held voice transmission conversations several times already and believed the most likely explanation to be that the three Devil Dao eccentrics were playing an elaborate ruse. They had deliberately drawn them away and allowed their juniors to seize the Heavenvoid Cauldron. Thus, while the three felt great remorse, they also vigilantly watched the actions of the Devil Dao cultivators, completely unwilling to allow the Devil Dao cultivators to leave their sights.

The Devil Dao cultivators naturally understood the intentions of Wan Tianming’s party. However, they were also burning with impatience, but could do nothing. All they wanted to do was quickly find Han Li and the others so they could take the Heavenvoid Cauldron.

As the Nascent Soul cultivators were bitterly feuding in the Inner Halls, the Core Formation cultivators had already taken advantage of the chaos to escape with the treasure. If this news were to spread, they would become laughingstocks! Furthermore, how could they allow the Heavenvoid Cauldron to fall into the hands of Han Li and the others?

Man Huzi was also at a loss as the Bone Sage wasn’t acting in accordance with their earlier agreement. Could it be that he truly

had fled with the cauldron? Were it a common Core Formation cultivator, it'd be impossible for them to break through the restrictions of a third floor secret room. However, if were the renegade Ghost Dao cultivator, the Bone Sage, it would be possible.

Although suspicions began to spring into his mind, Man Huzi didn't betray any of this in the slightest. But because he felt the need to muddy the waters to distance himself from this matter, he said with a cold tone, "Do you think it could be that the Star Palace elders still haven't left and had actually remained hidden nearby? When they saw us run out, they could've taken the chance to slay the three Core Formation cultivators and acquire the Heavenvoid Cauldron."

When they heard Man Huzi, they each looked at one another in dismay and then displayed pensive expressions.

Chapter 499: Wolf Artifact Spirit

As Han Li continued to fly far away from Yuan Yao, he felt an impatient urge to take out the Heavenvoid Cauldron and examine the contents. Shortly after giving in to this urge, Han Li felt like spitting blood. No matter what methods he used, the cauldron lid wouldn't open in the slightest.

Regardless of whether he wildly poured magic power into the cauldron, or struck the cauldron with his magic treasure out of frustration, the only response would be a flicker of blue light.

Han Li eventually managed to momentarily calm down and consider his situation. Apart from being able to shrink and enlarge the Heavenvoid Cauldron at will, there wasn't anything he could do with it.

Having determined this, Han Li vented his frustrations in the barren seas for a long while. The target of his groundless insults was naturally the Master of Heavenvoid Hall.

It was clear that the Master of Heavenvoid Hall was a strange individual. It wasn't that a Nascent Soul cultivation was needed, but rather that a trick needed to be used to open the cauldron. It wasn't as simple as pouring spiritual power into the cauldron. Could it be that opening it had something to do with the Celestial Ice Flames that had surrounded it?

With his mind clouded by emotion, Han Li could only make some muddled guesses.

But after some further thought, it seemed rather normal that the top ranked secret treasure in the Scattered Star Seas would require some sort of trick.

After only a short moment, he was able to discover two of the ancient treasure's remarkable abilities. Its simplest ability was activated by pouring spiritual power into it, producing a red and yellow barrier around the user's body. He had personally witnessed its power inside Heavenvoid Hall when he saw it block Layman Qingyi's grasp without the slightest harm done to it. Its defensive capabilities were clearly immense.

Its other ability required Han Li to silently mutter an ancient incantation to the scepter. After he immersed his spiritual sense into both ends of the scepter, he would be able to either separately summon two small wolves, with one red and the other yellow, or he could summon one large silver wolf.

The small red wolf seemed to be created from pure fire attribute Spiritual Qi and was innately capable of many impressive fire spirit magic techniques.

Similar to its counterpart, the small yellow wolf was created from pure earth attribute Spiritual Qi and was adept in earth spirit magic techniques. There were a few techniques that Han Li had previously learned, but he was quite surprised to find that the wolf didn't understand earth attribute movement techniques.

As for the silver wolf, Han Li found it quite troublesome. He was

incapable of controlling it. Although the silver wolf would respond to his orders, it would always move quite lazily.

When he ordered the wolf to display what magic techniques it was capable of, the silver wolf brushed him off as if it hadn't heard him. Han Li was rendered speechless when he saw the human-like insolence in its eyes.

Han Li was able to make out that the silver wolf was clearly the true form of the scepter's artifact spirit. As for the silver wolf's stubborn disobedience, Han Li could only guess that it was likely due to him having yet to completely refine the scepter.

However, Han Li had clearly remembered the astonishment that the Bone Sage had revealed upon seeing it. He had even released his Gold Lightning Bamboo arrow in the presence of Zenith Yin for it. There was undoubtedly more to the silver wolf artifact spirit than meets the eye.

As a result, Han Li put away the jade scepter without the slightest discouragement, and decided to take a look at the other treasures he had gained in Heavenvoid Hall.

There were the many treasures that the old devils had given him: the White Rhino Emblem, the Glacial Ice Pearl, the Royal Scale Plate, and so on. Although he had found nothing wrong with them after further inspection, he didn't dare to continue wearing them and placed them all in his storage pouch, apart from the Royal Scale Plate. Han Li was unwilling to forgo its extraordinary defensive abilities and decided to have it remain on his body.

As for the puppet fragments, the half-bottle of Myriad Year Spirit Milk, and the half-finger-long root of the Soul Nurturing Tree, Han Li also examined them.

As he rummaged through his new gains, Han Li had unintentionally found a few small rainbow beads. This had surprised him, but he soon remembered where they had come from. When he had first discovered the transportation formation at the Heavenly South Region, he melted the rainbow skeleton, producing these rainbow beads as a result. With the Bloodjade Spiders nearby the the skeleton, it seemed that the skeleton had belonged to the Bone Sage's other treasonous disciple, Zenith Brilliance.

However, Han Li still felt quite confused on why the skeleton was rainbow and what relation it had with the Emperor of Yue.

But as he gazed at the beads, Han Li was reminded of the Heavenmend Pills that had flown out of the Heavenvoid Cauldron. However, those pills were much larger and also shined with a far brighter light.

Han Li gazed at the beads in his hand and muttered to himself for a moment before putting them away with a solemn expression. Afterwards, Han Li verified his direction and donned his blood-red cloak before shooting off full speed ahead. He tore through the sky towards Heavenly Star City as a red shooting star.

Although he lost a large quantity of spiritual power by doing this,

it was several times faster than the speed of a common Core Formation cultivator. Currently, he wanted to return to his cave residence as soon as possible, preferably before the other cultivators even left Heavenvoid Hall.

It would have been possible for him to abandon the residence were it not for the meticulously raised Gold Devouring Beetles he had left behind. He was unwilling to allow those insects to fall into the hands of some future excavator. Perhaps the plunderer would also possess a secret technique to hasten their maturation as well!

Besides, he had already decided to immediately renounce his cave residence after returning to Heavenly Star City, and use the city's transportation formations to teleport him to the Outer Star Seas.

This way, he could both acquire more demon cores and avoid any of the attention he had attracted during his time in Heavenvoid Hall, allowing him to break through the early Core Formation stage as soon as possible.

After Han Li lost a majority of his magic power, he stopped using his cloak and switched to his normal method of flight as he held a mid grade spirit stone to slowly recover his magic power.

When his magic power was just about restored, he resumed his use of the blood-red cape and hurriedly tore through the sky.

In this manner, Han Li was able to travel a distance that would've normally taken him half a month in the span of a few short days!

On the way, Han Li had encountered a few cultivators, but they were only at the Foundation Establishment stage or lower. He was disinclined to pay them any notice and hurriedly shot past them. When they saw the speed of Han Li's streak of light, they naturally knew that he was a Core Formation expert and didn't dare to bother him.

But as Han Li drew closer to Heavenly Star City, he began to encounter cultivators at greater frequency, even spotting groups that could be considered an army.

After a month had gone by, Han Li finally encountered his first Core Formation cultivator.

When this cultivator saw Han Li, he vigilantly avoided him and clearly didn't have any intention of talking with him. This was completely understandable. But when he saw two more Core Formation cultivators act in the same way, Han Li felt that something was amiss.

Could it be that a significant event had occurred while he was in the Heavenvoid Hall? When this thought emerged, Han Li grew worried as he hurried along his way.

One day, when Han Li was slowly flying across the sea with a spirit stone in hand, he spotted a group of about eight cultivators flying nearby. They were all at Foundation Establishment and seemed to belong to a some local power.

Han Li wordlessly flew towards them as a streak of azure light.

Han Li didn't conceal himself, allowing the group of cultivators to see him approach. They raised an uproar, but the old man in charge berated them, causing them to stay still.

Although the old man in charge had fully whitened hair, he was quite intelligent. Without waiting for Han Li to draw close, he took the initiative to respectfully salute him and asked, "What can these Juniors help Senior with?" His mannerisms didn't hold the slightest flaw.

The azure light faded away before them to reveal Han Li. He indifferently swept his gaze past them and calmly asked, "What sect do you belong to and where are you headed?"

The old man solemnly replied, "These Juniors belong to the Three Immortals Sect. We are under orders from the sect master to head to Heavenly Star City!"

Han Li frowned and grew silent for a moment before he slowly said, "Heading to Heavenly Star City? Along the way, I've discovered that there were many cultivators heading towards Heavenly Star City as well. However, they appeared quite nervous."

The old man inwardly sighed, but he hastily laughed, "Haha! It seems Senior must have spent quite some time in a desolate area to not have heard of this. Not long ago, a great event occurred at Heavenly Star City. All the closest sects and powers have begun to

send people to the city!”

Chapter 500: The Starfall Coalition

Han Li spoke with an indifferent expression, “What great event? I only left seclusion a few days ago. Tell me about it!”

The old man locked his fingers together and spoke carefully, “It is only natural for Junior to answer Senior’s questions. However, may I ask for your name?”

After he heard this, Han Li felt somewhat surprised. After he tilted his head and pondered for a moment, he mysteriously smiled and said, “It seems that you’re being quite careful. I am the Exquisite Sound Sect’s Guest Elder Han. Have you heard of me before?”

After he heard of Han Li’s identity, he let out a long sigh of relief and smiled, “So it turns out to be Elder Han. You can’t be considered an outsider then. Our own sect’s Fairy Xuedi is close friends with Sect Master Fairy Violet Spirit.”

Han Li was surprised at his claim that they were on the same side and couldn’t help but laugh.

Han Li’s laugh caused the old man to grow somewhat uneasy.

‘Did I say something wrong?’ The old man thought apprehensively.

Han Li’s smile disappeared. “I don’t involve myself in the matters

of the sect, nor do I care if you are lying. All I want is for you to properly answer my question. I won't make things difficult for you. What major event occurred recently?"

The old man pledged he was speaking the truth with smile, "How could I deceive you, Senior? All of my words are true...", but when Han Li's gaze grew icy, he immediately started his explanation, "There were rumors that had suddenly emerged recently in the Scattered Star Seas that the Heavenly Star Sages were on the verge of breaking through to the great success stage of Divine Essencefused Light. The star palace took advantage of this opportunity to start eliminating certain disobedient or uncontrollable powers. This was originally believed to only be a rumor, but not longer after this rumor was spread, the Star Palace issued an official command to powers of all sizes to have their sect leaders and island lords immediately come to Heavenly Star City and pay audience to the Heavenly Star Sages. Otherwise, they will be branded as traitors and be eliminated."

Han Li blinked before speaking with disbelief, "Have every power pay audience to the Heavenly Star Sages? Did I hear correctly? The Star Palace gave such an obviously insidious command?"

The old man bitterly smiled, "That's right. The official command stunned many powers upon arrival. Were this at the peak of the Star Palace's power, there would be no problem with this order. But as of current, it would be surprising for the the powers of the Righteous and Devil Dao to obey."

Han Li swept his gaze past the group and frowned, asking, "Then all of the cultivators I saw on the way were heading towards

Heavenly Star City to pay audience to the Heavenly Star Sages?”

“That’s hard to say!” The old man appeared hesitant.

A strange expression appeared on Han Li’s face. He curiously asked, “Hard to say? What does that mean?”

The old man continued with a helpless expression, “Senior, there are some things I still haven’t said. Soon after the Heavenly Star Palace issued the command, the Righteous and Devilish Dao suddenly formed the Starfall Coalition, in proclamation of smashing apart the Star Palace’s hegemony in the Scattered Star Seas and ending their reign. The Righteous Dao has dispatched their enforcement elder Wan Sangu and the Devil Dao dispatched their towering hero, the Archsaint of the Six Paths, as the two leaders of Starfall Coalition. After the alliance was established, many sects belonging to the Righteous and Devilish Dao began joining under their banner. Unaffiliated powers have also joined them, and several tens of rogue Nascent Soul paragons have been appointed as elders in the alliance. In addition, the Starfall Coalition copied the Star Palace and made their own proclamation with what is known as the Starfall Coalition’s Ghost Crest, proclaiming that any power to respond to the Star Palace will be branded as their enemy without exception. In addition, they claim that they will soon be launching an attack on Heavenly Star City and welcome all powers to witness the battle, and make their allegiances clear.”

Having heard this, Han Li’s expression remained completely indifferent, but his mind was left in a daze. This was beyond imagination! Such a massive event had occurred in the short time

he had been stuck in Heavenvoid Hall!

For some time, Han Li was at a loss, but his mind suddenly stirred and he calmly gazed at the old man, asking, “What is the Starfall Coalition’s Ghost Crest? Do you have it on hand?”

The old man was stunned for a moment before enthusiastically replying, “It is in my sect master’s possession, but if Senior desires, I have a record of it on a jade slip that I can show him.”

“Yes! Let’s see it!” Han Li nodded with an indifferent expression.

The old man immediately searched his storage pouch for a yellow jade slip and hastily handed it over to Han Li.

Han Li bluntly took it and quickly immersed his spiritual sense into it. A second later, he felt shocked!

The crest appeared to be the same as the ghost head that the Six United Palaces’ Elder showed Wu Chou long ago. Although there were slight differences in appearance, it held a near exact resemblance. It seemed that the Righteous and Devil Dao had long colluded in secret, infiltrating other powers for many years with meticulous care.

Han Li was amazed and expressionlessly returned the jade slip to the old man.

Han Li casually said, “Since that is the case, you must be drawing

close to Heavenly Star City so that you may observe the results of the battle and come to a decision afterwards.”

The old man revealed a trace of embarrassment. “That’s right, Senior. Under the command of our Sect Master, we are to head over and examine the situation. After all, our Three Immortals Sect isn’t a large organization, and can only choose to be pragmatic. However, in this short amount of time, Starfall Coalition has already launched an attack on the Outer Star Islands and has successfully taken them over. There were even islands that defected to the Starfall Coalition. It seem that the Inner Star Islands will soon be attacked as well. There are also a few scoundrels that have taken advantage of the situation to stir up havoc. Many rogue cultivators have ended up dead in the wilderness and no small number of small sects have ended up thoroughly exterminated.” The old man’s worrying words explained why so many cultivators had been so cautious as they traveled.

Han Li was very satisfied with the old man’s answer and calmly said, “So it was like that. Alright, since you have answered my questions, you may leave.”

“Then us Juniors will hastily set off.” The old man rejoiced at Han Li’s words and respectfully said his farewells before hastily leading the group away.

Although he saw that Han Li wasn’t an evil and vicious character, he couldn’t help but feel apprehensive in the presence of an unfamiliar Core Formation cultivator.

Han Li stood motionlessly in place as he muttered to himself.

A huge war has erupted between the Star Palace and the alliance of the Righteous and Devilish Dao. On the bright side, this war would certainly take up the Nascent Soul eccentrics' attention. As they were aligned to either side, it would be impossible for them to avoid participating in the war. As such, he would be far safer as they wouldn't be able to dedicate their time to tracking him or the Heavenvoid Cauldron down.

Conversely, the war would make it rather troublesome for him to return to Heavenly Star City. At the very least, the cultivators entering the city would be thoroughly inspected, especially a Core Formation cultivator such as himself. Furthermore, if a battle were to erupt in the city before he returned, he would be unable to enter. The Star Palace would likely bar any cultivators from entering during that time.

With that thought, he let out a sigh.

In the following few days, he intercepted several more low level cultivators and asked them the same questions, only to receive similar answers.

As a result, Han Li was now floating above the sea, blankly staring off into the distance with a face of hesitation.

He raised his head to look at the blue sky and flipped his hand, causing a small azure bottle to appear.

Han Li helplessly looked at the small bottle. Using the Myriad Year Spirit Milk so soon seemed like an immense waste, but if he didn't hurry, the Starfall Coalition would launch an attack. His plans of entering Heavenly Star City and escaping to the Outer Star Seas through their transportation formations would then become null.

After a long while of contemplation, Han Li eventually opened the bottle with gritted teeth and carefully poured several drops of thick, transparent liquid into his mouth.

Afterwards, he placed the bottle away and put on his blood-red cloak before suddenly shooting through the sky and disappearing from sight. Half a month later, when Han Li had nearly exhausted his magic power, he took another few drops of spirit milk and continued to hurry on his way through the use of the blood-red cape. As a result, Han Li was able to travel at a speed similar to that of common Nascent Soul cultivators, and greatly reduced his travel time.

Along the way, the few Core Formation cultivators that he came across had mistaken Han Li to be a Nascent Soul expert and steered clear of his path.

As expected, there weren't any cultivators that dared to even think of bothering a Nascent Soul expert.